

Swine Flu

There have been cases of swine flu in California. All of those cases have been mild to moderate and those infected have recovered. See [information on cases in California and other states](#) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Swine flu (also known as swine influenza) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza that regularly cause outbreaks of influenza among pigs. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect people, but human infections with swine flu do occur. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that this swine flu virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

What are the symptoms of swine flu?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu

In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How serious is swine flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Between 2005 until January 2009, 12 human cases of swine flu were detected in the U.S. with no deaths occurring. However, swine flu infection can be serious.

How do you catch swine flu?

Spread of swine flu can occur in two ways:

- Through contact with infected pigs or environments contaminated with swine flu viruses.
- Through contact with a person with swine flu. Human-to-human spread of swine flu has been documented also and is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal

flu. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or zanamivir (Relenza) for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others?

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

Types of Flu

Don't be confused by the different types of flu in the news.

- [Seasonal Flu](#) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.
- [Swine Flu](#) - See our fact sheet.
- [Avian Flu](#) is deadly to domestic fowl. Very rarely it can be transmitted from birds to humans.
- [Pandemic Flu](#) is flu that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness that spreads easily from person to person. Currently there is no pandemic flu.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact their health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

- If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.
- If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

Health Emergency Information Line: 1-888-959-991

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