

Swine Influenza and You

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **There are 5 confirmed cases of swine flu in New Jersey at this time. NJ Department of Health continues to investigate reports of illness. There was one death in Texas of a toddler from Mexico.**
- **In addition to New Jersey's 5 new cases, as of 9:00 am on 5/1/09, a total of 109 cases of swine influenza infection in humans were confirmed in 11 U.S. states by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): New York, California, Texas, Kansas, Arizona, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, South Carolina, and Ohio. For further updates, please go to www.cdc.gov/swineflu**
- **Investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the infections and whether additional people are infected with swine influenza viruses (swine flu).**
- **CDC is working very closely with officials in states where human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) have been identified, as well as with health officials in Mexico, Canada and the World Health Organization. This includes sending staff to affected areas in the U.S. and internationally to provide guidance and technical support. The CDC has activated its Emergency Operations Center to coordinate this investigation.**
- **Influenza is always serious. Each year, seasonal influenza (flu) results in an estimated 36,000 deaths from flu-related causes. This outbreak certainly poses the potential to be at least as serious as seasonal flu if not more so.**
- **New guidance is being issued continuously. Visit the CDC website for more information or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.**
- **On April 27th, CDC issued a travel health warning recommending that travelers postpone all non-essential travel to Mexico until further notice.**
- **At this point, we need to move away from focus on numbers.**
- **Activate your business contingency and/or continuity of operations plans, etc.**
- **Consider developing a family emergency plan as a precaution. This should include storing a supply of extra food, medicines, and other essential supplies.**
- **It is essential to enforce your agency policies for exclusion from work, school or visitation for illness. Following your agency's policy, employees, students, and/or visitors should be excluded for any illnesses clinically compatible with swine flu.**

SWINE FLU

What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Most commonly, human cases of swine flu happen in people who are around pigs. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

Are there human infections with swine flu in the U.S.?

In late March and early April 2009, cases of human infection with swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses were first reported in Southern California and near San Antonio, Texas. Other U.S. states have reported cases of swine flu infection in humans and cases have been reported internationally as well. An updated case count of confirmed swine flu infections in the United States is kept at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm> CDC and local and state health agencies are working together to investigate this situation.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

CDC has determined that this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

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

Fever, Cough, Sore throat, Body ache, Headache, Chills, Fatigue (tiredness)

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 other chronic medical conditions to worsen.

How serious is swine flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe.

How does swine flu spread?

The 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 infected with swine flu. Human to human spread of swine flu has been documented and is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu: through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

When can someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Children, especially younger children, may be contagious for longer periods.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir 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).

If I had flu shot for this past flu season, will it protect me?

No, the swine flu is a new virus and was not included in the 2008-2009 seasonal flu vaccine. It is not likely that the 2008-2009 seasonal flu vaccine provides any protection against swine 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:

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners (Make sure it is at least 60% alcohol.) are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Close contact is defined by the CDC to be within 6’.
- 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.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

Wash with soap and warm water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner. We recommend that you wash your hands for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands. Make sure the gel is at least 60% alcohol on the label.

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

What household disinfectants can I use kill the swine flu virus on hard surfaces?

CDC recommends these common household disinfectants:

- Liquid Lysol (1/2 cup of Lysol to 9 1/2 cups of water) or
- Bleach (1 cup of bleach to 9 cups of water).
- Spray Nine (needs no dilution)
- Other disinfectants that will work can be found at http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/avian_flu_products.htm

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, contact your health care provider. 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.

Additional information:

www.cdc.gov/swineflu

www.nj.gov/health