

# *Protecting Yourself from the Swine Flu*

## **Overview**

Information about the swine flu and how to prevent the illness.

- What is the swine flu?
- Preventing the spread of a virus
- If you get sick

The U.S. has declared a public health emergency after confirming multiple human cases of swine flu in several states. Cases of swine flu have also been confirmed in Mexico, Canada, New Zealand, Spain, Israel, and the United Kingdom.

## **What is the swine flu?**

The swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is a respiratory disease in pigs. Although human infection is not typical, it can happen, causing symptoms similar to those of the human flu:

- sore throat
- coughing
- fever
- chills
- headaches
- body aches
- fatigue
- diarrhea
- vomiting

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the swine flu is a contagious virus that can spread from human to human through coughs and sneezes. It is not spread by preparing or eating properly cooked pork.

## **Preventing the spread of a virus**

There is not currently a swine flu vaccine. But you can help avoid becoming infected with the swine flu by taking the same actions you would to prevent other viruses:

- *Avoid close contact with people who are sick.*
- *Try not to touch your mouth, nose, or eyes.*
- *Frequently wash your hands with soap and water.* Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is also effective when soap and running water are not available.

## 2 • Protecting Yourself from the Swine Flu

- *Practice healthy habits*, including getting plenty of sleep, being physically active, managing your stress, drinking plenty of fluids, and eating healthfully.
- *The CDC recommends avoiding nonessential travel to Mexico.* If you must travel to an area that has reported cases of swine flu, make sure to follow the CDC recommendations provided online at:  
[wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/SwineFluMexico.aspx](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/SwineFluMexico.aspx).

You can also help prevent the spread of a virus if you get sick:

- *Limit contact with others.* Officials are asking those who are sick to stay home from work or school. Also avoid traveling and crowds of people.
- *Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough.* Throw tissues in the trash immediately after using them, and then wash your hands.

### **If you get sick**

If you live in an area where cases of swine flu have been found -- or if you have recently visited one of those areas -- contact your doctor if you develop flu symptoms. Your doctor can determine whether you should be treated for flu. Those who become infected with the swine flu can be treated with certain antiviral medications that fight the virus. Antiviral medications can also ease symptoms and help prevent complications.

The swine flu can cause serious complications including pneumonia and respiratory failure. Seek medical attention immediately if you experience any of the following:

- difficulty breathing
- shortness of breath
- pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- sudden dizziness
- confusion
- severe or persistent vomiting

Children may show these additional emergency warning signs:

- fast breathing
- trouble breathing
- bluish skin color
- not drinking enough

### 3 • Protecting Yourself from the Swine Flu

- not waking up
- not interacting
- being so irritable that they don't want to be held
- symptoms improve but then return with a fever and a worse cough
- fever with a rash

For answers to frequently asked questions about the swine flu, visit the CDC Web site at [http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu\\_you.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm). You can find additional swine flu information online by visiting the CDC ([www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu)) and the World Health Organization ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

This information is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Contact your health care provider whenever you experience symptoms that you are concerned about -- whether they are related to the swine flu or any other medical issue.