

QUICK FACTS on SWINE FLU

Swine flu is a contagious respiratory disease typically limited to pigs or those in close proximity to live pigs. However, this disease can now be spread from person to person and has caused the United States to declare a health emergency.

What Are the Symptoms?

Swine flu has the same symptoms as regular human flu, including fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills and fatigue. The disease may make existing health conditions worse, severe illness such as pneumonia, respiratory failure, and death were reported.

Can Swine Flu be Treated?

Yes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the use of antiviral drugs for the treatment and/or prevention of swine flu. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that keep flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster.

Where Are People Getting Sick?

Areas with persons getting sick with swine flu are San Diego and Imperial County, CA; Mexico; San Antonio, TX; New York City, NY; Ohio; Canada; Austria; Germany; United Kingdom; New Zealand; and Spain.

How Long Can A Person with Swine Flu Spread It to Others?

Swine flu is highly contagious. People with swine flu could be contagious as long as they have symptoms and for 5–7 days following the onset of the illness.

How Does Swine Flu Spread?

Swine flu is thought to be spread the same way that regular human flu is spread. Viruses are mainly spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with the flu.

When Should I See My Physician?

If you live in areas where swine flu cases have been identified, have traveled to an affected area or been exposed to someone who lives in the area AND develop flu-like symptoms, consult your physician immediately. If these flu-like conditions get worse, seek emergency medical attention.

For children, emergency warning signs include fast or difficult breathing, bluish skin color, lack of fluids, lethargy, being extremely irritable to the point of not wanting to be held, flu-like symptoms that improve then return and fever with a rash.

For adults, emergency services are needed if there is difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion or severe vomiting.

How Can I Avoid Getting Sick?

- Take care of yourself. Eat well, get plenty of sleep and exercise, and drink lots of liquids.
- Carefully wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand cleaners often.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Discard tissues after use.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others.

For more information, log onto www.cdc.gov or contact Marlene Stetson, RN, infection prevention and control coordinator at 814.234.6164.

