Swine Flu Information and Recommendations

The World Health Organization this weekend declared an international public health emergency over the outbreak of swine flu by calling for worldwide surveillance of the spread of the virus. CDC is still in the very active phase of investigation. Of concern is that transmission of this novel virus appears to be human-to-human, primarily because the CDC has not been able to identify direct animal exposure.

Remember that at this point there are few cases worldwide or in CA. Staying aware and educated through CDC website updates and through the use of good hygiene practices will help to keep you well.

To prevent the spread of swine flu:

- Avoid contact with ill persons.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (if you do not have a tissue). Throw used tissues in a trash can. Attached is a link on COVER YOUR COUGH that you can access and print. [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/pdf/covercough_hcp8-5x11.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/pdf/covercough_hcp8-5x11.pdf)
- After you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- If you think you are ill with flu, avoid close contact with others as much as possible. Stay at home. Seek medical care if you are severely ill (such as having trouble breathing). There are antiviral medications for prevention and treatment of swine flu that a doctor can prescribe. Do not go to work, school, or travel while ill.

For those seeking more information on this infection see below:

FAQ’s and Additional Information on 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. 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 at [http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm](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 aches, headache, chills and 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 does swine flu spread?
Spread of this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

How 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.
What should I do to keep from getting the flu?
First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

How can human infections with swine influenza be diagnosed?
To diagnose swine influenza A infection, a respiratory specimen would generally need to be collected within the first 4 to 5 days of illness (when an infected person is most likely to be shedding virus). However, some persons, especially children, may shed virus for 10 days or longer. Identification as a swine flu influenza A virus requires sending the specimen to CDC for laboratory testing.

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).

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.

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.

How long can viruses live outside the body?
We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. Frequent hand washing will help you reduce the chance of contamination.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?
If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible. Do not go to work or school if ill. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?
Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner. We recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash 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.

What should I do if I get sick? If you live in areas where swine influenza cases have been identified and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, visit your 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.

How serious is swine flu infection?
Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe.

Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?
No. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.