

### **STAY HEALTHY: Update on H1N1 (Swine) Flu**

With the beginning of a new school year students, parents, and school staff need to be aware of how to protect themselves and others from contracting H1N1 flu which is still present in our environment. H1N1 is a particular threat to school aged youth, the elderly, pregnant women, and anyone with a chronic medical condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma and emphysema. You can best protect yourself by following the activities below because influenza spreads person to person through coughing/sneezing of persons infected with the flu.

- Cover your nose and mouth with sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw tissue away. Teach others to do the same.
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing/sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Know the symptoms to be concerned about: fever with cough or sore throat. Body aches may be present. Some people experience vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- **STAY HOME IF YOU GET SICK. KEEP CHILDREN HOME FROM SCHOOL IF THEY ARE SICK.**
- If you are diagnosed with the flu get plenty of rest, clear liquids, keep those who are sick away from other family members, ask your doctor if other family members need treatment. Clean bathroom daily with disinfectant.
- Students may return to school after fever free for 24 hours.
- **You will be called to pick up your child** if your child gets a fever while in school . Please be prepared to have care for your child should this occur.

If you have other questions please call your local health department at 425-1818 or visit the Centers for Disease Control website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-Info (1-800-232-4636).



# H1N1 Influenza and You

## **What is H1N1?**

Swine Influenza (H1N1) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get H1N1, but human infections can and do happen. H1N1 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 H1N1 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 H1N1 infection in humans and cases have been reported internationally as well. An updated case count of confirmed H1N1 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 H1N1 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 is not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

## **What are the signs and symptoms of H1N1 in people?**

The symptoms of H1N1 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 H1N1. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with H1N1 infection in people. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

## **How does H1N1 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.

## **How long can an infected person spread H1N1 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 handwashing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

**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, 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.