



Home Precautions for Swine influenza

What is Swine Flu?

A virus infection (swine flu) can cause a wide range of symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Certain groups might be more likely to develop severe illness such as pneumonia, respiratory failure from swine flu infection, such as persons with chronic medical conditions.

Infectious Period

Persons with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious 1 day before illness onset and up to 7 days following illness onset. Persons who continue to be ill longer than 7 days after illness onset should be considered potentially contagious until symptoms have resolved. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

How can I protect myself from getting swine influenza from infected people?

In the past, human infection with swine influenza was generally mild but is known to have caused severe illness such as pneumonia. For the current outbreaks in the United States and Mexico however, the clinical pictures have been different. None of the confirmed cases in the United States have had the severe form of the disease and the patients recovered from illness without requiring medical care. In Mexico, some patients reportedly had the severe form of the disease.

To protect yourself, practice general preventive measures for influenza:

- Avoid close contact with people who appear unwell and who have fever and cough.
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently and thoroughly.
- Practice good health habits including adequate sleep, eating nutritious food, and keeping physically active.

If there is an ill person at home:

- Try to provide the ill person a separate section in the house. If this is not possible, keep the patient at least 6 feet in distance from others.
- Cover mouth and nose when caring for the ill person. Masks can be bought commercially or made using the readily available materials as long as they are disposed of or cleaned properly.
- Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly after each contact with the ill person.

- Try to improve the air flow in the area where the ill person stays. Use doors and windows to take advantage of breezes.
- Keep the environment clean with readily available household cleaning agents.

How Flu Spreads:

The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

What drugs are available for treatment?

The medications that are recommended are oseltamivir and zanamivir.

Fevers and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin) or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

WARNING: Do *not* give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

Steps to Lessen the Spread of Flu in the Home

When providing care to a household member who is sick with influenza, the most important ways to protect yourself and others who are not sick are to:

- Keep the sick person away from other people as much as
- Remind the sick person to cover their coughs and clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often, especially after coughing and/or sneezing.
- Have everyone in the household clean their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Ask your healthcare provider if household contacts of the sick person-particularly those contacts who may have chronic health conditions-should take antiviral to prevent the flu.
- Check with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema
- Check with their health care provide about whether they should take antiviral medications
- Stay home for 7 days after the start of illness and fever is gone
- Get plenty of rest
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated
- avoid close contact with others – do not go to work or school while ill
- be watchful for emergency warning that might indicate you need to seek medical attention

Perform Hand Hygiene:

Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands.

- All persons in the household should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub frequently, including after every contact with the sick person or the person's room or bathroom.
- Use paper towels for drying hands after hand washing or dedicate cloth towels to each person in the household. For example, have different colored towels for each person.

Placement of the sick person

- Keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the house. (For example, a spare bedroom with its own bathroom, if that's possible.) Keep the sickroom door closed.
- Unless necessary for medical care, persons with the flu should not leave the home when they have a fever or during the time that they are most likely to spread their infection to others (7 days after onset of symptoms in adults, and 10 days after onset of symptoms in children).
- If persons with the flu need to leave the home (for example, for medical care), they should cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and wear a loose-fitting (surgical) mask if available.
- Have the sick person wear a surgical mask if they need to be in a common area of the house near other persons.
- If possible, sick persons should use a separate bathroom. This bathroom should be cleaned daily with household disinfectant (see below).

Protect other persons in the home

- The sick person should not have visitors other than caregivers. A phone call is safer than a visit.
- If possible, have only one adult in the home take care of the sick person.
- Avoid having pregnant women care for the sick person. (Pregnant women are at increased risk of influenza-related complications and immunity can be suppressed during pregnancy).
- If possible, consideration should be given to maintaining good ventilation in shared household areas (e.g., keeping windows open in restrooms, kitchen, bathroom, etc.).
- Antivirals can be used to prevent the flu, so check with your healthcare provider to see if some persons in the home should use antiviral medications.

Using Facemasks or Respirators

- Avoid close contact (less than about 6 feet away) with the sick person as much as possible.
- If you must have close contact with the sick person (for example, hold a sick infant), spend the least amount of time possible in close contact and try to wear a facemask.
- If respiratory treatment is required it should be performed in a separate room away from common areas of the house when at all possible.
- Used facemasks and N95 respirators should be taken off and placed immediately in the regular trash so they don't touch anything else.
- After you take off a facemask or N95 respirator, clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

What should I do if I think I have swine influenza?

If you feel unwell, have high fever, cough and/or sore throat:

- Stay at home and keep away from work, school or crowds as much as possible.
- Rest and take plenty of fluids.
- Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when coughing and sneezing and dispose of the used tissues properly.
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently and thoroughly, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Inform family and friends about your illness and seek help for household chores that require contact with other people such as shopping.

If you need medical attention:

- Contact your doctor or healthcare provider before travelling to see them and report your symptoms. Follow the advice given to you for care.
- If it is not possible to contact your healthcare provider in advance, communicate your suspicion of having swine influenza immediately upon arrival at the healthcare facility.
- Take care to cover your nose and mouth during travel.

When to Seek Emergency Medical Care

- has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry
- has seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions) is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

Household Cleaning, Laundry, and Waste Disposal

- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.
- Wash linens (such as bed sheets and towels) by using household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid “hugging” laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating yourself. Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

Is it safe to eat pork and pork products?

Yes. Swine influenza has not been shown to be transmissible to people through eating properly handled and prepared pork (pig meat) or other products derived from pigs. The swine influenza virus is killed by cooking temperatures of 160°F/70°C, corresponding to the general guidance for the preparation of pork and other meat.