

Swine Flu

Swine flu is caused by type A influenza viruses and is generally a respiratory disease affecting pigs. However, the current outbreak in the United States and internationally is of great concern because humans have been infected with the virus and are spreading it via human-to-human contact. The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and begin with a fever, sore throat, sneezing, headache, and continue with dry cough, aching muscles, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting as well. Good hand washing will help prevent the spread of the swine flu and other germs. Antiviral prescription medication can make the illness milder and may prevent serious complications especially for those with chronic respiratory conditions.

Here are some things to consider:

1. Make sure to wash hands frequently using soap and warm water. Using an anti-bacterial hand sanitizer is good but will not replace good hand washing.
2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
3. Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze to protect others.
4. Have tissues handy and be sure to throw used tissues in the waste basket.
5. Eat balanced meals, drink lots of fluids, excluding sodas and other drinks high in sugar.
6. Get plenty of rest and stay home from work or school if you are sick.
7. If you come down with flu like symptoms, have a chronic medical condition like diabetes or respiratory disease, contact your doctor who will determine if testing or treatment is needed.
8. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends seeking emergency medical care for people with any of the warning signs:
Children: Fast or trouble breathing, bluish skin color, dehydration, lethargy, irritable behavior, relapse of flu symptoms, fever with rash.
Adults: Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting.

According to the (CDC), children or teenagers who may have the flu should **NOT** be given aspirin or medicines that contain aspirin.

Please note that the flu shot will not protect against the swine flu.

For More Information About Swine Flu:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: The Swine Flu and You
http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Get Smart Program:
More Info About Flu
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

County of Los Angeles, Public Health: It's Not Flu as Usual
<http://www.lapublichealth.org/ip/flu/2007-2008/>

KEY POINTS:

- Wash hands often and well
- Get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids
- Use tissues when you cough or sneeze
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth—germs spread this way
- Consult a doctor if you have any of the CDC warning signs

