



Health & Safety Alert #47-05-09

H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Virus

What is H1N1 Virus?

H1N1 Influenza (Swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. H1N1 influenza viruses cause high levels of illness and low death rates in pigs. H1N1 influenza viruses may circulate among swine throughout the year, but most outbreaks occur during the late fall and winter months similar to outbreaks in humans. The classical swine flu virus (an influenza type A H1N1 virus) was first isolated from a pig in 1930.

H1N1 Virus in Humans

What are the symptoms of H1N1 influenza in humans?

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include fever above 100, fatigue, lack of appetite, and coughing. Some people with H1N1 influenza also have reported runny/stuffy nose, sore throat, chills, headache, body ache, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. In the past, severe illness and deaths have been reported with H1N1 influenza infection in people. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 influenza may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. People with symptoms should see their doctors and stay home from work or school.

Emergency warning signs in children 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

Emergency warning signs in adults 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 people catch H1N1 influenza from eating pork?

No. H1N1 influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You can not get H1N1 influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products are safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit kills the H1N1 influenza virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

How does H1N1 influenza spread?

Influenza viruses can be directly transmitted from pigs to people and from people to pigs. Human infection with influenza viruses from pigs are most likely to occur when people are in close proximity to infected pigs, such as in pig barns and livestock exhibits housing pigs at fairs. Human-to-human transmission of H1N1 influenza can also occur. This is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal influenza occurs in people, which is mainly person-to-person transmission through coughing or sneezing of people infected with the influenza virus. People may become infected by touching something with influenza viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What is being done?

The United States Government has declared a public health emergency in the United States. CDC's response goals are to reduce transmission and illness severity, and provide information to help health care providers, public health officials and the public address the challenges posed by this emergency. CDC is issuing and updating interim guidance daily in response to the rapidly evolving situation. CDC's Division of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) continues to send antiviral drugs, personal protective equipment, and respiratory protection devices to all 50 states and U.S. Territories to help them respond to the outbreak. The H1N1 influenza A virus is susceptible to the prescription antiviral drugs oseltamivir and zanamivir. In addition, the Federal Government and manufacturers have begun the process of developing a vaccine against this new virus.

Prevention

What you can do to stay healthy

- Take everyday actions to stay healthy:
 - ❑ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you don't have a tissue, cough and/or sneeze into your shirt sleeve.
 - ❑ Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for about 15 to 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
 - ❑ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.
 - ❑ Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds, and other social distancing measures.
- Develop a provider/family emergency plan as a precaution. This should include storing a supply of food, medicines, facemasks, alcohol-based hand rubs, and other essential supplies.
- If there are still questions and/or concerns call 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit the website <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>
- Ohio Department of Health H1N1 (Swine influenza) Information line is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please call 1-866-800-1404 or visit the website for more information http://www.odh.ohio.gov/landing/phs_emergency/swineflu.aspx

For questions or comments regarding the above Alert, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.

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