

Frequently asked questions

How do people become infected with influenza A(H1N1)?

Outbreaks in humans are now occurring from human-to-human transmission. When infected people cough or sneeze, infected droplets get on their hands, drop onto surfaces, or are dispersed into the air. Another person can breathe in contaminated air, or touch infected hands or surfaces, and be exposed.

What are the signs and symptoms of infection?

Early signs of influenza A(H1N1) are flu-like, including fever, cough, headache, muscle and joint pain, sore throat and runny nose, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhoea. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Is there any confirmation of transmission between pigs and humans at this point?

No.

How long someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to seven or more days after becoming sick.

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

Germ can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germ and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air.

How long can viruses live outside the body?

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live two hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. Frequent hand washing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

Currently available seasonal influenza vaccine does not protect against H1N1 flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germ that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with people having respiratory illness.
- If one gets sick with influenza, one must stay at home, away from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. However, if one is having any respiratory distress, one should report to a nearby hospital.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

First and most important: wash your hands frequently. 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. Avoid touching surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people having respiratory illness.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes. Oseltamivir is the recommended anti viral drug for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with the influenza A H1N1. 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). Government has adequate stock and the drug is made available to government hospitals at the time of outbreak and would be available to you free of cost. . The drug is to be administered under supervision of clinicians.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in areas where influenza A H1N1 cases have been identified and become ill with influenza like symptoms e.g. fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may 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/eating food
- 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 influenza A H1N1 from eating or preparing pork?

No. swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.