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Protecting Yourself Against Swine Flu

What is swine flu?

Swine influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that cause regular outbreaks in pigs. Cases of human infection with swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses have been confirmed in the United States. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Department of Public Health and local health agencies are working together to investigate this situation. Visit ready.illinois.gov or www.cdc.gov/swineflu/ for more information.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, and, in some cases people have reported diarrhea and nausea. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Although this situation is serious, there is no need for alarm. There are simply **everyday actions you and your family can take to stay healthy.**

- If you have a cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or cough or sneeze into your sleeve. 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 hands cleaners also are effective when hand washing facilities are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread through such contact.
- Influenza is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible. Do not go to work or school if ill. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner. We recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in areas where swine influenza cases have been identified and you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose and sore throat, and, in some cases, nausea, or diarrhea, you should contact your 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.



Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs

Fact Sheet

The **single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated** each year, but good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu. There also are **flu antiviral drugs** that can be used to treat and prevent the flu.

1. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

2. Stay home when you are sick.

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

3. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

4. Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Printable Materials for Promoting Good Health Habits

- [Cover Your Cough](#)
- [Be a Germ Stopper: Healthy Habits Keep You Well](#)
- [Flu Prevention Toolkit: Real People. Real Solutions](#)
- [Stopping the Spread of Germs at Home, Work & School](#)

Page last updated October 6, 2006

Content Source: [Coordinating Center for Infectious Diseases \(CCID\)](#)

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