

# Swine Flu (H1N1) Fact Sheet

## ***What is swine flu?***

There are many types of influenza or “flu.”

The type that currently has health officials worried is swine influenza A (H1N1).

Swine flu is contagious and is spreading from human to human.

## ***What are the symptoms of swine flu?***

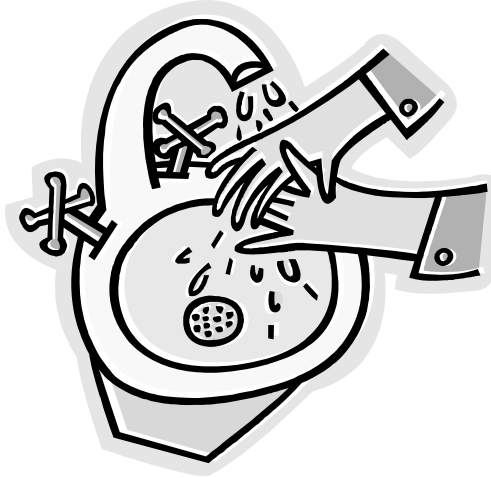
The symptoms of swine flu are similar to seasonal influenza and may include coughing, diarrhea, fever, lack of appetite, lethargy, nausea, runny nose, sore throat and vomiting.

## ***How is swine flu spread?***

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

## ***How can I keep from getting swine flu?***

- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 15-20 seconds or by using alcohol-based hand sanitizers.



- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches an object that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, stay home from work, school and errands. Keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick.

## ***What treatments are available for swine flu? How serious is the disease?***

For the most part, the swine flu should be treated with bed rest and plenty of liquids. You should also avoid alcohol and tobacco. Your doctor may be able to provide you with medication that can decrease the length of the swine flu.

Swine flu can be fatal and deaths from swine flu have been reported.

## ***How do I know if I have swine flu or seasonal flu?***

The symptoms of swine flu and seasonal flu are very similar. The only way to determine if a person has swine flu is to have laboratory tests performed. Local health care providers can perform the tests and samples will be analyzed to determine if it is a case of swine flu.

## ***Is there a vaccine for swine flu?***

A vaccine is in development and may be ready in mid-October; however it is not expected that enough doses will be available for all those who wish to be vaccinated.



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### ***How do you care for someone who has swine flu?***

If you suspect that someone you live with has swine flu, the first thing to do is monitor his condition.

- Check the person's temperature using a digital thermometer.
- Check the person's skin for color (pink, pale or bluish) and rash.
- Monitor the amount of liquids a person consumes.
- Keep track of medications, dosages and times given.
- Separate the person with swine flu from other people who live in the home.
- One person in the household should be the main caregiver for the sick person.
- People other than the caregiver who live in the home should limit contact with the sick person.
- The sick person should use a separate bathroom from other people in the house, if possible.

### ***What should be provided to the sick person?***

Several items should be made available to the sick person to make them as comfortable as possible.

- Use ibuprofen or acetaminophen for fever, sore throat and general discomfort. (Do not use aspirin in children or

teenagers because it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.)

- If the person is not vomiting, offer small amounts of liquids frequently to prevent dehydration, even if the person does not feel thirsty.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag for disposal within reach of the sick person.
- Do not allow the person to drink alcohol or use tobacco. Do not allow smoking in the house.



### ***When should I seek professional treatment?***

If the person you are caring for experiences any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness/confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

### ***How can you prevent the spread of swine flu in the home?***

- Make sure all family members wash their hands often with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- All dishes and eating utensils should be washed in the dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. Separation of eating utensils for use by a patient is not necessary.
- Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine or by hand with warm water and soap. It is not necessary to separate soiled linen from the patient from other household laundry.
- Tissues used by the sick person should be placed in a trash bag and thrown away.
- If you must have close contact with the sick person (for example, holding a sick infant), spend the least amount of time possible in close contact and try to wear a facemask or a respirator.

***For the latest information on the swine flu, visit <http://www.nkyhealth.org/swineflu>***



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