



Is There Any Cause for Worry Over Swine Flu?



What is the Flu?

"The flu is a contagious respiratory (lung) illness caused by a virus."

(<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hanta/hps/noframes/virus.htm>)

A virus is an infectious organism that cannot be seen with a microscope and is not able to copy itself on its own. To copy itself, a virus enters a cell within the

body of a human or other creature, called the host. The virus forces the host to copy the virus. Once copied, the new virus leaves the host and is ready to invade others.

About 36,000 people die each year from complications of the flu. Today, we know of 3 types of flu viruses in people. Most seasonal flu viruses are type A and B. (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>).

- Type A flu has many different subtypes (strains). Type A usually affects mammals and birds and various strains can be transmitted to humans. The virus we are hearing about today is the category A – H1N1 of swine origin.
- Type B flu usually affects humans and seals. Type B viruses copy slower than type A viruses.
- Type C is not a common type of flu. This kind of flu could infect humans and pigs.

What is the Swine Flu?

"Novel Influenza A H1N1 is a new flu virus of swine origin."

(<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>) Swine influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza (flu) in pigs. In the past, humans who were diagnosed with the swine flu virus were in an environment containing an infected pig, such as a pig barn.

- In 1930, the swine influenza virus was identified. The swine virus remained quiet and unchanged for over 50 years.
- In 1979, the swine flu virus strain H1N1 was noted in Fort Dix, N.J. Two-hundred people tested positive for this strain.
- In the 1990s, the swine influenza virus changed, and new strains appeared.
- In 2009, the swine flu virus H1N1 was first noted in Mexico mid-April 2009. The virus was also reported in the United States and around the world during the same time period. To date, the virus continues to spread

like a seasonal flu.

(<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5817a1.htm>)

(http://www.emedicinehealth.com/swine_flu/article_em.htm)

Facts about the Swine (H1N1) flu virus

Human to Human spread is like seasonal viruses; the virus is airborne spread by coughing and sneezing, and/or by touching an object that someone infected with the virus has coughed or sneezed on and you touch the object then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.

This is a strain of flu that our bodies have not developed antibodies to fight. What are antibodies? When our body identifies a new enemy (the virus) it builds an army (antibodies) to protect us. You cannot get this virus from eating pork.

Symptoms (Similar to other flu's):

Contagious one day before symptoms appear and seven days after the first symptom:

- Body aches
- Chills
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Headaches
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea and vomiting can also occur

What can I do? And how can I prevent the spread of germs?

- Avoid contact with others who may be sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Call your doctor about your symptoms
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve
- Drink clear fluid
- If you feel sick-stay home
- Rest
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers also work
- Stay home 7 days after symptoms are noticed

What are the warning signs?

"If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care." The following is taken from the Centers for

Disease Control web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ga.htm>.

“In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention:”

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- 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

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
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Can I travel to Mexico?

If traveling to Mexico, discuss the risks and benefits of travel with your doctor or you just may want to consider postponing travel altogether.

(www.cdc.gov/travel/notices.aspx) The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta describes the travelers that are at high risk for complications and include the following: (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/notices.aspx>)

- Children less than 5 years old
- Persons aged 65 years or older

- Children and adolescents (less than 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye syndrome after flu virus infection
- Pregnant women
- Adults and children who have chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders
- Adults and children who have immunosuppressant (including immunosuppressant caused by medications or by HIV)
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities Also, don't forget, you may not get sick if you travel to Mexico but you could bring back the virus when you come home and infect someone who may not be able to recover from this flu. Being careful and smart about protecting yourself and others may lead you to a “Healthier Tomorrow”.

For more information:

- **Contact your local or state health department**
- **Visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.**
- **Contact the CDC 24 hours a day every day at 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or TTY at 888-232-6348 or by visiting cdcinfo@cdc.gov.**

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