



Swine-Origin Influenza: Frequently Asked Questions

What is swine flu?

Swine influenza (swine flu) is caused by type A influenza viruses that cause regular infection outbreaks among pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person but usually not more than a chain of three people.

Are there human infections with swine flu in the United States?

In late March and early April 2009, cases of human infection with a new swine influenza virus (swine-origin flu) were first reported in California and Texas. Around the same time, cases were being reported in Mexico. Other U.S. states have reported cases of swine-origin flu infection in humans, and cases have been reported internationally as well.

For the most updated case count of laboratory confirmed swine flu infections in the United States, visit the CDC website, <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>.

Is there swine-origin flu in Hawai'i?

No swine-origin flu cases have been reported yet in Hawai'i. The Hawai'i Department of Health is working hard to keep this swine-origin flu from spreading in Hawai'i by screening passengers arriving at airports, investigating and testing people with illnesses and recent travel to affected areas, giving the latest information to doctors, making sure an extra supply of flu-specific medicines for our state, and by helping people learn what they can do to stay healthy.

Is this swine-origin flu virus contagious?

Yes, this swine-origin flu virus seems able to spread from person-to-person, like regular human influenza viruses. However, you can protect yourself from getting sick by avoiding contact with sick people and washing your hands often.

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

The symptoms of this swine-origin flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and tiredness. Some people with this new infection have also had diarrhea and vomiting. As with the seasonal flu that occurs every year, severe illnesses and even deaths can occur, especially in persons with some medical condition and in the young or old.

How does swine-origin flu spread?

This swine-origin flu virus appears to be spread the same way as our regular seasonal flu viruses. Flu viruses are spread from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing or by touching infected droplets. People may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

How long is a person with swine-origin flu contagious?

An adult with swine-origin flu may be contagious to others from a day before they get sick until 7 days after becoming sick. Children may be contagious for 10 days after getting sick with swine-origin flu.

Are there medicines to treat swine-origin flu?

Medicines such as acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) and ibuprofen (e.g. Motrin, Advil) can help make people with flu feel better. If you have a medical condition such as liver, stomach, or kidney problems or take certain medicines (such as blood thinners like coumadin) you should talk with your doctor before using these medicines. Antiviral medications are available to treat swine-origin flu, but most illnesses seen in the United States have so far been mild and not everyone may need to be treated with these antiviral medicines. It will be important to use these medicines to treat hospitalized patients and patients who may be at risk for more severe illness because of their age or health conditions. Your doctor will be able to help decide if you should take these medicines.

Is there a vaccine against swine-origin flu?

Scientists are working on making a vaccine for this swine-origin flu, but it may not be ready for several months. In the meantime you can protect yourself by avoiding contact with sick people and washing your hands frequently.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

Protect yourself and others from diseases like flu by taking these simple steps:

- 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 or sneeze into your sleeve or the inside of your upper arm or elbow, away from your hands.
- 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.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat healthy foods.

Is it safe for children to attend school?

Right now children should attend school if they are healthy. Children who are sick with a fever and cough or sore throat should stay home from school until they have recovered. If cases of this swine-origin flu are seen in Hawai'i, the

Department of Education may decide, based on the Department of Health recommendations, to close schools for a time until no more cases are seen.

It is safe for adults to go to work?

Right now you should not be at risk for swine-origin flu at work. If cases of swine-origin flu are seen in Hawai'i, your employer may have plans for you to change your work schedule. If you become sick, especially with a fever with cough or sore throat, you should stay home from work until you have recovered. If your doctor suspects that you may have swine-origin flu you will be asked to stay home for at least 7 days.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you become ill with flu-like symptoms, such as fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you should contact your doctor. Your doctor will help decide if you need flu testing or treatment. Call your doctor's office before you arrive, and let them know you are worried about having flu and why. They may give you a mask to wear and have you avoid the waiting room.

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.

You should seek immediate medical care or call 911 if you have any of the following:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

What should I do to prepare for an outbreak of swine-origin flu in Hawai'i?

If there is a reported case of this swine-origin flu in Hawai'i, efforts will be made to contain the spread of this infection. Such efforts may include closing schools and encouraging people to stay at home. Each home should be prepared with an emergency preparedness kit that contains at least 3 days supply of water, food, a can opener, clothes, flashlight, hygiene items, first aid basics, and a radio. You should make sure that all members of your family keep at least a 2 week supply of any necessary medicines in the house. You should make plans for childcare at home if schools are closed.

Can I get swine influenza, including this new swine-origin flu, from eating or preparing pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses, including this new swine-origin flu, are not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.