

Key Facts about Swine Influenza (Swine Flu) for Southwest District Health Staff Revision 2 (4/27/2009 2:00 p.m.)

Swine Flu website last updated Sunday, April 27, 2009 10:15 AM ET

Human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection have been identified in the United States. Human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection also have been identified internationally. The current U.S. case count is provided below.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the infection and whether additional people have been infected with swine influenza viruses.

CDC is working very closely with officials in states where human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) have been identified, as well as with health officials in Mexico, Canada and the World Health Organization. This includes deploying staff domestically and internationally to provide guidance and technical support. CDC has activated its Emergency Operations Center to coordinate this investigation.

Southwest District Health is working very closely with the State of Idaho Health & Welfare for the response to the Swine Flu outbreak. At this time there is cause for concern, but not alarm or panic. The Federal Government has declared a public health emergency.

The CDC has identified 25% of their Strategic National Stockpile medications for this response for release to the states. Yesterday afternoon, Idaho requested an allocation of 50,000 treatment regimens, which is scheduled to arrive later this week....in case the drugs are needed. All of the Health Districts are now working the logistics for receipt, storage, and distribution plan (if necessary) for those drugs.

What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in 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 in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

U.S. Human Cases of Swine Flu Infection (As of April 26, 2009 9:00 AM ET)

State	# of laboratory confirmed cases
California	7 cases
Kansas	2 cases
New York City	8 cases
Ohio	1 case
Texas	2 cases
TOTAL COUNT	20 cases

International Human Cases of Swine Flu Infection
See: [World Health Organization](#)

Are there human infections with swine flu in the U.S.?

In late March and early April 2009, cases of human infection with swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses were first reported in Southern California and near San Antonio, Texas. Other U.S. states have reported cases of swine flu infection in humans and cases have been reported internationally as well. An updated case count of confirmed swine flu infections in the United States is kept at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm> CDC and local and state health agencies are working together to investigate this situation. (See current case table above.)

Are there human infections with swine flu in Idaho? Currently there are 4 suspect cases being investigated in Idaho. Two live in Madison County, 1 in Fremont County, and 1 from Ada County. Specimen samples from all four are being shipped for laboratory testing.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

CDC has determined that this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

How many swine flu viruses are there?

Like all influenza viruses, swine flu viruses change constantly. Pigs can be infected by avian influenza and human influenza viruses as well as swine influenza viruses. When influenza viruses from different species infect pigs, the viruses can reassort (i.e. swap genes) and new viruses that are a mix of swine, human and/or avian influenza viruses can emerge. Over the years, different variations of swine flu viruses have emerged. At this time, there are four main influenza type A virus subtypes that have been isolated in pigs: H1N1, H1N2, H3N2, and H3N1. However, most of the recently isolated influenza viruses from pigs have been H1N1 viruses.

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. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How does swine flu spread?

Spread of this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of 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 someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

First and most important: wash your hands. 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. Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

While there is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs 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 sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses.

- Oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu ®) is approved to both treat and prevent influenza A and B virus infection in people one year of age and older.
- Zanamivir (brand name Relenza ®) is approved to treat influenza A and B virus infection in people 7 years and older and to prevent influenza A and B virus infection in people 5 years and older.

Unless otherwise notified by Southwest District Health, consult your medical provider for these antivirals if you are exhibiting the symptoms of swine flu.

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. 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).

Recommendations for using antiviral drugs for treatment or prevention of swine influenza may change as we learn more about this new virus.

Clinicians should consider treating any person with confirmed or suspected swine influenza with an antiviral drug. Visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/recommendations.htm> for specific recommendations.

As a precautionary measure, the CDC will soon begin shipping medications and supplies to Idaho in case the outbreak becomes more serious. Southwest District Health will work closely with with State officials to distribute these resources to the residents in Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, and Washington Counties if necessary.

How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others?

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

How long can viruses live outside the body?

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. Frequent handwashing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

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 (singing the Happy Birthday song twice). 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 become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, 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.

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
- 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

How serious is swine flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Between 2005 until January 2009, 12 human cases of swine flu were detected in the U.S. with no deaths occurring. However, swine flu infection can be serious. In September 1988, a previously healthy 32-year-old pregnant woman in Wisconsin was hospitalized for pneumonia after being infected with swine flu and died 8 days later. A swine flu outbreak in Fort Dix, New Jersey occurred in 1976 that caused more than 200 cases with serious illness in several people and one death.

Can humans catch swine flu?

Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with swine flu have occurred. Most commonly, these cases occur in persons with direct exposure to pigs (e.g. children near pigs at a fair or workers in the swine industry). In addition, there have been documented cases of one person spreading swine flu to others. For example, an outbreak of apparent swine flu infection in pigs in Wisconsin in 1988

resulted in multiple human infections, and, although no community outbreak resulted, there was antibody evidence of virus transmission from the patient to health care workers who had close contact with the patient.

How common is swine flu infection in humans?

In the past, CDC received reports of approximately one human swine influenza virus infection every one to two years in the U.S., but from December 2005 through February 2009, 12 cases of human infection with swine influenza have been reported.

Can people catch swine flu from eating pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You can not get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

How can human infections with swine influenza be diagnosed?

To diagnose swine influenza A infection, a respiratory specimen would generally need to be collected within the first 4 to 5 days of illness (when an infected person is most likely to be shedding virus). However, some persons, especially children, may shed virus for 10 days or longer. Identification as a swine flu influenza A virus requires sending the specimen to CDC for laboratory testing.

What other examples of swine flu outbreaks are there?

Probably the most well known is an outbreak of swine flu among soldiers in Fort Dix, New Jersey in 1976. The virus caused disease with x-ray evidence of pneumonia in at least 4 soldiers and 1 death; all of these patients had previously been healthy. The virus was transmitted to close contacts in a basic training environment, with limited transmission outside the basic training group. The virus is thought to have circulated for a month and disappeared. The source of the virus, the exact time of its introduction into Fort Dix, and factors limiting its spread and duration are unknown. The Fort Dix outbreak may have been caused by introduction of an animal virus into a stressed human population in close contact in crowded facilities during the winter. The swine influenza A virus collected from a Fort Dix soldier was named A/New Jersey/76 (Hsw1N1).

Is the H1N1 swine flu virus the same as human H1N1 viruses?

No. The H1N1 swine flu viruses are antigenically very different from human H1N1 viruses and, therefore, vaccines for human seasonal flu would not provide protection from H1N1 swine flu viruses.

Should I avoid travel?

CDC Recommendations

CDC has NOT recommended that people avoid travel at this time. If you are planning travel to these areas, the following recommendations will help you to reduce your risk of infection and stay healthy.

Monitor the International Situation

Check updates from the:

- [California Department of Public Health](#)
- [Texas Department of State Health Services](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Pan American Health Organization](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#)

Prepare for your trip before you leave

- Visit [CDC's Travelers' Health Website](#) to learn about any disease risks and CDC health recommendations for areas you plan to visit.
- Be sure you are up-to-date with all your routine vaccinations, including seasonal influenza vaccine if available.
- Identify the health-care resources in the area(s) you will be visiting.

During your visit to an area affected by Swine Influenza

Monitor the local situation

- Pay attention to announcements from the local government.
- Follow local public health guidelines, including any movement restrictions and prevention recommendations.

Practice healthy habits to help stop the spread of influenza

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. This removes germs from your skin and helps prevent diseases from spreading.
 - Use waterless alcohol-based hand gels (containing at least 60% alcohol) when soap is not available and hands are not visibly dirty.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and put your used tissue in a wastebasket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Follow all local health recommendations. For example, you may be asked to put on a surgical mask to protect others.

Seek medical care if you feel sick

- If you are ill with fever and other symptoms of swine flu like cough and sore throat, see a doctor, especially if you think you may have had contact with

- someone with swine flu or severe respiratory illness in the past 7 days before becoming ill.
- Antiviral Medications: Persons traveling within the US that are at high risk of severe illness from influenza (for example persons with chronic conditions such as diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, and the elderly) are recommended to take antiviral medications for prevention of swine influenza during travel. The recommended antiviral drugs for swine influenza are oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (brand name Relenza®). Both are prescription drugs that fight against swine flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. These drugs can prevent infection if taken as a preventative. Talk to your doctor about correct indications for using influenza antiviral medications. Always seek medical care if you are severely ill.
 - Antiviral chemoprophylaxis (pre-exposure or post-exposure) is **recommended** for the following individuals:
 1. Household close contacts who are at high-risk for complications of influenza (persons with certain chronic medical conditions, elderly) of a confirmed or suspected case.
 2. School children who are at high-risk for complications of influenza (persons with certain chronic medical conditions) who had close contact (face-to-face) with a confirmed or suspected case.
 3. Travelers to Mexico who are at high-risk for complications of influenza (persons with certain chronic medical conditions, elderly).
 4. Border workers (Mexico) who are at high-risk for complications of influenza (persons with certain chronic medical conditions, elderly).
 5. Health care workers or public health workers who had unprotected close contact with an ill confirmed case of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection during the case's infectious period.
 - Antiviral chemoprophylaxis can be **considered** for the following:
 1. Any health care worker who is at high-risk for complications of influenza (persons with certain chronic medical conditions, elderly) who is working in an area with confirmed swine influenza A (H1N1) cases, and who is caring for patients with any acute febrile respiratory illness.
 2. Non-high risk persons who are travelers to Mexico, first responders, or border workers who are working in areas with confirmed cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection.
 - For more information on CDC's recommendations for antiviral use during the swine flu outbreak, please visit www.cdc.gov/swineflu
 - You should avoid further travel until you are free of symptoms, unless traveling locally for medical care.

After you return from your trip

- Closely monitor your health for 7 days
- If you become ill with fever and other symptoms of swine flu like cough and sore throat and possibly vomiting and diarrhea during this period, call your doctor or

clinic for an appointment right away. Your doctor may test you for influenza and decide whether influenza antiviral treatment is indicated.

- **When you make the appointment, tell the doctor the following:**
 - **Your symptoms,**
 - **Where you traveled, and**
 - **If you have had close contact with a person infected with swine flu.**
- Avoid leaving your home while sick except to get local medical care, or as instructed by your doctor. Do not go to work or school while ill. If you must leave your home (for example, to seek medical care) wear a surgical mask to keep from spreading your illness to others.
- Always cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw away used tissues in a trash can.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often and especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with other people as much as possible.
- Wear a surgical mask if you are in contact with other people.

Additional Information

If you have specific questions about the swine influenza cases see <http://www.cdc.gov/contact/> or call 1-800-232-4636, which is 1-800-CDC-INFO. To learn more about travel health, visit www.cdc.gov/travel .

Preventing the Flu: What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

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. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of the infected people.

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. If you get sick, the CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

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. Remember to throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

4. Wash your hands.

Washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

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](#)