

SWINE FLU (H1N1)



HINI FLU VIRUS (SWINE FLU)

While swine flu isn't as scary as it seemed a few years ago, it's still important to protect yourself from getting it. Like seasonal flu, it can cause more serious health problems for some people.

SWINE FLU SYMPTOMS

These symptoms are the same as seasonal flu.

They can include:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Chills
- Cough and sneezing
- Headache
- Weakness and fatigue
- Aching muscles and joints
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Diarrhea or stomach upset
- Loss of appetite

Like the regular flu, swine flu can lead to more serious problems including pneumonia, a lung infection, and other breathing problems. And it can make an illness like asthma worse.

If you have symptoms like shortness of breath, severe vomiting, pain in your belly or sides, dizziness, or confusion, call your doctor.

HOW DO YOU CATCH IT?

The same way as the seasonal flu, through coughs and sneezes, or by touching a contaminated surface and then touching the nose or mouth. People who have it can spread it one day before they have any symptoms and as many as 7 days after they get sick. Kids can be contagious for as long as 10 days.

ARE THERE TESTS FOR SWINE FLU?

It's hard to tell whether you have swine flu or seasonal flu, because most symptoms are the same. But a lab test is the only way to know to test for swine flu, your doctor runs a swab up the inside of your nose around the back of your throat. But the test isn't as common as those for regular flu. So the only people who really need to be tested are those in the hospital or those at high risk for life-threatening problems from swine flu, such as:

- Children under 5 years old
- People 65 or older
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic lung, heart, liver, blood, nervous system, neuromuscular, or metabolic problems
- People who have weakened immune systems (including those who take medications to suppress their immune systems)
- People in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

HOW IS IT TREATED?

- Some of the same antiviral drugs that are used to treat seasonal flu also work against H1N1 swine flu. These drugs work best when you take them within 48 hours of the first flu symptoms, but they can help even if you get them later on.
- Antibiotics won't do anything for you. That's because flu is caused by a virus, not bacteria.
- Over-the-counter pain remedies and cold and flu medications can help relieve aches, pains, and fever.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM GETTING SICK?

Besides a flu shot, there are other things you can do to stay healthy:

- Wash your hands throughout the day with soap and water.
- Or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - Avoid people who are sick.

References

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Flu.gov.