Swine Influenza (Flu) Fact Sheet

What is Swine Influenza?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza in pigs. Swine flu viruses cause high levels of illness and low death rates in pigs. Swine influenza viruses may circulate among swine throughout the year, but most outbreaks occur during the late fall and winter months similar to outbreaks in humans.

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

How common is swine flu infection in humans?

The CDC reports that in the past they 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.

What are the symptoms of swine flu in humans?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include:

- Fever (Greater than 100.0 degrees by mouth)
- Lethargy (general feelings of tiredness, fatigue, weakness)
- Muscle Aches
- Lack of appetite
- Coughing

Some people with swine flu also have reported:

- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting
- Diarrhea

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 are safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

How does swine flu spread?

Influenza viruses can be directly transmitted from pigs to people and from people to pigs. Human infection with flu viruses from pigs are most likely to occur when people are in close proximity to infected pigs, such as in pig barns and livestock exhibits housing pigs at fairs. Human-to-human transmission of swine flu can also occur. This is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu occurs in people, which is mainly person-to-person transmission through coughing or sneezing of people infected with the influenza virus. **People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.**

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. A physician will decide what medical tests are needed.

What medications are available to treat swine flu infections in humans?

There are four different antiviral drugs that are licensed for use in the US for the treatment of influenza: amantadine, rimantadine, oseltamivir and zanamivir. While most swine influenza viruses have been susceptible to all four drugs, the most recent swine influenza viruses isolated from humans are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. At this time, CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses. A physician will decide what medical treatments are indicated.

Is there a vaccine for swine flu?

Vaccines are available to be given to pigs to prevent swine influenza. There is no vaccine to protect humans from swine flu. The seasonal influenza vaccine will likely help provide partial protection against swine H3N2, but not swine H1N1 viruses.

What steps can individuals take to prevent the spread of Flu?

1. Wash your hands often to reduce the spread of germs.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
3. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth (dirty tissue etc.).
4. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
5. If you do not have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
6. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
7. Stay home when you are sick.
8. **Talk to your doctor**. Tell any healthcare providers who treat you that you have flu like symptoms and follow their recommendations.
9. Practice good health habits.
10. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

What steps can schools take as Infection Control Measures?

1. Encourage students, staff, parents, and visitors to follow proper hand washing techniques. Use alcohol based hand sanitizers when soap and water is not directly accessible.
2. Always remind children to:
    - Cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and have them throw the tissue away after they use it.
    - Wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze.
    - Remind them to not to touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs often spread this way
3. Make sure that hand washing posters are posted in visible areas throughout the school (e.g., bathrooms, cafeteria, employee lounges, locker rooms, etc.).
4. Ensure common surface areas (door knobs, tabletops, desks) are cleaned and disinfected

Please contact Health Education Services at 754-321-2272 if you have questions. Additional information is available on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/swineflu/key_facts.htm.