

Swine Flu Recommendations from Health Services for Students, Faculty, and Staff

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 have been reported recently. There have been no cases in North Carolina. It does not appear that this year's flu shot is effective in preventing swine flu. Therefore, even if you received a flu shot you could be susceptible to the swine flu.

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu that you are familiar with. These include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue

Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Like any flu, the swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions such as asthma or other respiratory or cardiac disease.

If you feel sick, go to Health Services or see your health care provider. Do not go to class or work. There are several prescription medications that are effective against this virus.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

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

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 should I do to keep from getting the flu?

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.

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. 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).

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 hand washing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses 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.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

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.

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?

There is more to hand washing than you think! By rubbing your hands vigorously with soapy water, you pull the dirt and the oily soils free from your skin. The soap lather suspends both the dirt and germs trapped inside and are then quickly washed away.

Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Good hand washing technique is easy to learn and can significantly reduce the spread of infectious diseases among both children and adults.

Follow these four simple steps to keeping hands clean:

1. Wet your hands with warm running water.
2. Add soap, then rub your hands together, making a soapy lather. Do this away from the running water for at least 20 seconds (an easy way to be sure you rub your hands together long enough is to sing the ABCs while you do it), being careful not to wash the lather away. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers and under your nails.
3. Rinse your hands well under warm running water. Let the water run back into the sink, not down to your elbows.
4. Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel. Then turn off the water with a clean paper towel and dispose in a proper receptacle.

The best source for further information is:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>