

Swine Flu 2009

Description:

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza) is a new type of influenza virus which causes respiratory disease in humans.

Symptoms:

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of seasonal influenza, including:

fever and any one of the following:

- cough
- sore throat

Other symptoms may include a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have also reported diarrhoea and vomiting. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Transmission:

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza) is thought to be spread from person to person in the same way seasonal influenza and other common respiratory infections spread.

Being in close contact (eg. within a metre) with an infected person while they are talking, coughing or sneezing puts you at risk of becoming infected. Virus-containing droplets can land on the surfaces of the mouth, nose and throat of persons close by. The virus may also be spread through contact with infectious respiratory secretions on the hands of an infected person or other objects and surfaces.

You cannot get Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza) from eating properly handled and prepared pork or pork products.

Infectious Period

People with Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza) virus infection should be considered contagious from one day before the onset of symptoms and for up to 7 days following the onset of symptoms provided fever has resolved. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

Treatment:

Antiviral medications such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza) can be used for the treatment of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza) for those who are at risk of developing complications. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines which fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. Antiviral drugs work best if started soon after becoming sick (within 2 days of symptoms). Treatment is only recommended for those who have a fever and/or sore throat, are within the first two days of onset of symptoms and are in a vulnerable group mentioned above or a high risk setting. Antibiotics may be required for secondary bacterial infections such as pneumonia.

Health Outcome:

Like seasonal flu, Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza) in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Serious complications such as pneumonia can occur. People with existing health problems may be at risk of these conditions worsening if they develop Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza).

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Some vulnerable groups may be at higher risk for complications from Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza). These include people with chronic respiratory conditions (including asthma requiring routine preventative medication or COPD), pregnant women (particularly in the second and third trimester), people with morbid obesity, Indigenous people of any age, other diseases such as: cardiac disease (excluding simple hypertension) and other chronic diseases such as: diabetes mellitus, metabolic, renal or liver disease, haemoglobinopathies, immunosuppressed (including cancers, HIV/AIDS infection, drugs) and neurological conditions.

You should seek medical care if you experience shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, if concerned about symptoms, or if symptoms worsen. For parents with a young child who is ill, seek medical care immediately if a child has fast or strained/laboured breathing, continuing fever or convulsions (fits/seizures).

Prevention:

The seasonal influenza vaccine is unlikely to offer useful protection against Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza). However, it is strongly recommended that people continue to be vaccinated against seasonal influenza. A suitable vaccine against Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza) is currently being developed.

For both seasonal and Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Influenza), the best way to protect yourself and others is to:

- stay home when you are sick
- wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand gel
- wash your hands prior to touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- when coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues which should be disposed of immediately
- don't share items such as cigarettes, glasses or cups, lipstick, toys or anything which could be contaminated with respiratory secretions
- maintain at least one metre distance from people who have flu-like symptoms such as coughing or sneezing
- consult your doctor if you have a cough and fever and follow their instructions, including taking medicine as prescribed
- if attending a medical practice, alert the receptionist of your symptoms so you can be seated away from others and possibly be given a surgical mask.

Help and Assistance

For further information check the [Queensland Swine Flu response website](#), contact your local doctor or ring 13HEALTH. (13 43 25 84)

Related Content

- [Influenza - a Queensland Health fact sheet](#)
- [Pandemic Influenza - a Queensland Health fact sheet](#)
- [Queensland Swine Flu Response website](#)