

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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. The classical swine flu virus (an influenza type A H1N1 virus) was first isolated from a pig in 1930.

Swine Flu in Humans

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.

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, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and 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 is 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.

Tips for Infection Prevention

- Wash hands with soap and water thoroughly and often - at least 20 seconds, and rinse theme with clean water.
- Turn off the faucet with a paper towel, not with your clean hands!
- Dry your hands with a paper towel or use an air dryer.
- Use a paper towel also to operate the door knob or door handle.

- Alcohol-based hand-sanitizers are recommended for customers and employees during this time. As usual, they are to be used after proper hand washing.
- Avoid crowds and minimize person to person contact
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm or sleeve
- Turn your face away from others around you
- Put used tissues into a waste basket
- Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes
- If you have flu-like symptoms, tell your manager and stay home from work.