

**Q: What is swine flu?**

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

**Q: What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu?**

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

**Q: What can I do to stop the spreading of the swine flu?**

First and most importantly: 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. Additional steps that are integral to maintaining good health include:

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw your tissue in a trash receptacle; do not otherwise discard.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

If you get sick, you should stay home from work or school and limit contact with others.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

**Q: As a parent, how can I encourage my student to minimize risks?** Encourage your child to inform you if they are not feeling well including: coughing, sneezing and fever. Allow your child to stay home if experiencing any cold or flu symptoms. Encourage your child to utilize tissue if they cough or sneeze.

**Q: 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.

**Q: 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.

As additional information becomes available, we will share it with you as quickly as possible. If you have additional questions or concerns, we suggest you log onto the following sites or contact your school nurse or local public health department.

**Updated Information and Statistics:**

NATIONAL: Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>

STATE: Illinois Department of Public Health website (<http://www.idph.state.il.us/>)

LOCAL: Cook County Department of Public Health website ([http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/swine\\_flu](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/swine_flu))

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