

Key Facts about Swine Influenza (Swine Flu)

What is Swine Influenza (Swine flu)?

Swine Influenza is typically a respiratory disease of pigs; however, swine flu has expanded to human-to-human transmission. Swine flu is a type of Influenza-Like Illness (ILI).

Can humans catch swine flu?

Documented human-to-human transmission of swine flu is now occurring in California.

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° F or 37.8 ° C), AND cough and sore throat, and lack of appetite. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

How does swine flu spread?

Human-to-human transmission of swine flu predominantly occurs through direct droplet transmission. This is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu, which is mainly person-to-person transmission through coughing or sneezing of infected people. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose (moist mucous membranes).

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 a laboratory for testing.

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

At this time, CDC recommends the use of Tamiflu (oseltamivir phosphate) or Relenza (zanamivir) as part of the treatment and/or reduction of severity of infection with swine influenza viruses. More information on treatment recommendations can be found at www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/recommendations.htm.

Is the H1N1 swine flu virus the same as human H1N1 viruses?

No. The H1N1 swine flu viruses are antigenically very different from human H1N1 viruses and, therefore, vaccines for human seasonal flu do not provide protection from this H1N1 set of swine flu viruses.

Is there a vaccine for swine flu?

There is no vaccine to protect humans from swine flu at this time.

How can I protect myself?

Maintain a barrier between yourself and the patient. The first barrier is a distance of 6 feet or more to determine if the patient has ILI; however, if the 6 foot barrier must be broken then respiratory personal protective equipment (PPE) should be donned.