

Questions and Answers about Swine Flu from CDC

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.

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

There are four different antiviral drugs that are licensed for use in the US for the treatment of influenza: amantadine, rimantadine, oseltamivir and zanamivir. While most swine influenza viruses have been susceptible to all four drugs, the most recent swine influenza viruses isolated from humans are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. At this time, CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

Is there a vaccine for swine flu?

Vaccines are available to be given to pigs to prevent swine influenza. There is no vaccine to protect humans from swine flu. The seasonal influenza vaccine will likely help provide partial protection against swine H3N2, but not swine H1N1 viruses.

Over the years, different variations of swine flu viruses have emerged. At this time, there are four main influenza type A virus subtypes that have been isolated in pigs: H1N1, H1N2, H3N2, and H3N1. However, most of the recently isolated influenza viruses from pigs have been H1N1 viruses.

What are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy?

- 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 hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
 - Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
 - If you get sick, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What about Antiviral Drugs?

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) with activity against influenza viruses, including swine influenza viruses. Antiviral drugs can be used to treat swine flu or to prevent infection with swine flu viruses. These medications must be prescribed by a health care professional. Influenza antiviral drugs only work against influenza viruses -- they will not help treat or prevent symptoms caused by infection from other viruses that can cause symptoms similar to the flu. There are four influenza antiviral drugs approved for use in the United States (oseltamivir, zanamivir, amantadine and rimantadine). The swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses that have been detected in humans in the United States and Mexico are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine so these drugs will not work against these swine influenza

viruses. Laboratory testing on these swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses so far indicate that they are susceptible (sensitive) to oseltamivir and zanamivir.

What are the Benefits of Antiviral Drugs?

- **Treatment:** If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious influenza complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started as soon after getting sick as possible, and might not work if started more than 48 hours after illness starts.
- **Prevention:** Influenza antiviral drugs also can be used to prevent influenza when they are given to a person who is not ill, but who has been or may be near a person with swine influenza. When used to prevent the flu, antiviral drugs are about 70% to 90% effective. When used for prevention, the number of days that they should be used will vary depending on a person's particular situation.

CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

- **Oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu ®) is approved to both treat and prevent influenza A and B virus infection in people one year of age and older.**
- **Zanamivir (brand name Relenza ®) is approved to treat influenza A and B virus infection in people 7 years and older and to prevent influenza A and B virus infection in people 5 years and older.**

Recommendations for using antiviral drugs for treatment or prevention of swine influenza will change as we learn more about this new virus. Clinicians should consider treating any person with confirmed or suspected swine influenza with an antiviral drug. Visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/recommendations.htm> for specific recommendations.