

Swine Flu is a febrile respiratory disease caused by Type A (H1N1) influenza virus. People usually don't get swine flu, but it can happen. It is contagious and can spread from human to human - how easily it spreads is unknown at this time. Symptoms include - fever, cough, sore throat, aches, headaches, chills and fatigue, some reports of diarrhea and vomiting. Swine flu is **NOT** spread by preparing or eating pork. Incubation is 24 to 48 hrs and infected people can spread the virus up to 7 or more days after becoming sick (children especially can spread the virus for longer periods). The virus is spread by respiratory droplets - when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches eyes, nose, or mouth. The virus can live outside the body about 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks

Prevention - wash hands, get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritiously. Try not to touch surfaces that could be contaminated with the virus (sinks, countertops, door knobs, etc). Avoid contact with people who are sick or stay home and avoid contact with people if you are sick. Keep your own hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth. Cover nose/mouth when sneeze or cough, throw Kleenex's away. Kleenexes are much better than handkerchiefs.

Treatment - there are antivirals that can be used to treat the infection (it fights against the swine flu by keeping the viruses from reproducing in your body). Antivirals can make illness milder and make you feel better faster. They usually work best if started within 2 days of symptoms. Otherwise, staying home, resting, eating well and drinking plenty of fluid is the best "medicine" for mild cases.

Hand Washing Technique - use soap and water or alcohol based hand cleaner (recommend soap and water). Vigorously scrub all surfaces of hands for 20 seconds. If using alcohol based cleaner, rub on hands until they are dry.

If you get sick - if the swine flu becomes identified in our area and you get flu-like symptoms like mentioned above (esp with a fever) - call your health care provider - especially if you are worried about your symptoms. Stay home, avoid contact with people.

Emergency Warning Signs that need urgent medical attention - difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, pain or pressure in chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion.

How serious is this? - Swine flu (like seasonal flu) can vary in intensity. Between 2005 and 2009, there were 12 cases of swine flu in the US with no deaths. With that said, the swine flu CAN be serious. In 1976 at Fort Dix, NJ 200 cases of swine flu were diagnosed with multiple cases of serious illness and one death. This is a rapidly evolving situation. The best source of accurate information is on Center for Disease Control's website at **CDC.gov**. Also, outbreaks of any type of illness are usually found through public schools. This is why the CDC and DOE will be intense about watching school and universities (esp public ones).