

## SWINE FLU: 8 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW—NOW

**Swine flu has been all over the news lately, and everyone is worried. Before you cancel all your plans and lock yourself in the house, read on for answers to common questions about swine flu.**

### **What is swine flu?**

Swine flu, or H1N1 flu, is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by the type A influenza virus. People don't usually get swine flu, but now it's happening around the world.

### **How does it spread?**

You won't catch swine flu from eating pork products. It's spread by coughing, sneezing or even touching a door handle, elevator button, computer keyboard or other object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose. People with the virus could be contagious from one day before they have symptoms until seven days later.

### **What are the symptoms?**

They're similar to those of the regular flu—fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also experience diarrhea and vomiting.

### **Are there medicines to treat swine flu?**

Yes. The prescription antiviral medicines Tamiflu and Relenza can prevent infection and, if you do get sick, they can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious complications. But not everyone needs these drugs—many of the first people in the U.S. with lab-confirmed swine flu got better without treatment.

### **Is there a swine flu vaccine?**

No. Researchers are working to make a vaccine, but it's a long process that will take months.

### **What can I do to protect myself?**

Washing your hands for at least 15 to 20 seconds is the best way to protect against germs. No soap and water? Use alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers  
Avoid close contact with people who are sick

### **What should I do if I get sick?**

If you have flu-like symptoms, stay home to keep the infection from spreading. Still not feeling well? Contact your doctor to find out if you need testing or treatment.

### **Are there any warning signs?**

Yes. If you have trouble breathing; flu-like symptoms that worsen; a fever with a rash; chest or stomach pain; sudden dizziness or confusion; or persistent vomiting, get emergency care.

**Sources:** CDC, World Health Organization

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