

H1N1 (swine flu) Fact Sheet

Information for People Living in Contra Costa County:

Several probable cases of H1N1 (swine flu) have been identified in Contra Costa County. None of the cases have been severe. It is now assumed that the virus is present throughout the community and schools.

Everyone is urged to continue practicing good hand washing and cough etiquette and to stay home from school or work if sick. Contra Costa Public Health recommends testing for H1N1 only for people with severe flu-like symptoms. Updates will be posted on the CCHS website at www.cchealth.org or sign up to follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/CoCoHealth>

In Contra Costa, health officials are advising the public to:

- Stay home from work or school if you are sick
- Consider staying home if you live with someone who is sick with flu-like symptoms
- Do not attend large public events if you are sick or anyone in your family is sick with flu-like symptoms
- Attending a public event may increase your chance of being exposed to an illness.
- Use good hand and respiratory hygiene if you attend a public event.
- Contact your health care provider if you have flu symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. Flu symptoms include fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea.
- Only go to the emergency room if you have a medical emergency.
- We are recommending that only people ill with severe flu-like symptoms be tested for H1N1 (swine flu).
- There is no vaccine available right now to protect against H1N1 (swine flu). The CDC is working on one. It will not likely be available for several months.
- We do not recommend treatment with antivirals unless your health provider advises you to do so.
- You can help protect yourself and your family by using the same simple steps used to prevent regular seasonal flu: Cough or sneeze into your sleeve, wash your hands frequently or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, try to avoid contact with sick people.
- Masks: We are not currently recommending the general public wear facemasks. We are recommending that people who are sick with flu symptoms wear a facemask around others. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from others who may be sick.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 (swine flu)?

The symptoms of H1N1 (swine flu) in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human season flu and may include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, and in some cases diarrhea and vomiting.

In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with H1N1 (swine flu) infection in people. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 (swine flu) may make underlying chronic medical conditions worse.

How do you catch H1N1 (swine flu)?

Spread of H1N1 (swine flu) can occur in two ways:

- Through contact with a person infected with H1N1 (swine flu). H1N1 (swine flu) is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu, which is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. Like regular flu, the H1N1 (swine flu) virus can live for several days on surfaces such as doorknobs so frequent hand washing is important.
- Through contact with infected pigs or environments contaminated with H1N1 (swine flu) viruses.

Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get H1N1 (swine flu) from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you should contact your health care provider. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. If you do not have a health care provider, you can call the Contra Costa Health Services Advice Nurse Line at 1-877-661-6230. Please do not go to the Emergency Room unless you have a medical emergency.

- If you are sick, you should stay home from work or school and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.
- If you become ill and experience difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion and/or severe or persistent vomiting, seek emergency medical care by calling 911 or going to the nearest hospital. In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include: Fast breathing or trouble breathing, bluish skin color, not drinking enough fluids, not waking up or not interacting, being so irritable that the child does not want to be held, flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough, and/or fever with a rash

How serious is H1N1 (swine flu) infection?

H1N1 (swine flu) (also known as swine influenza) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza that regularly cause outbreaks of influenza among pigs. H1N1 (swine flu) viruses do not normally infect people, but human infections with H1N1 (swine flu) do occur. The CDC has determined that this H1N1 (swine flu) virus is contagious and is spreading from person to person. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 (swine flu) in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe.

Are there medicines to treat H1N1 (swine flu)?

Yes. Your doctor can determine if you need medication, such as when you have been exposed or are ill. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or zanamivir (Relenza) for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started within 2 days of symptoms.

We are not recommending treatment with antivirals unless your health provider advises you to do so.

We are recommending that only people ill with severe flu-like symptoms be tested for H1N1 (swine flu).

How long can an infected person spread H1N1 (swine flu) to others?

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against H1N1 (swine flu). There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. Like regular flu, the H1N1 (swine flu) virus can live for several days on surfaces such as doorknobs.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way. Contact your provider.

More information on H1N1 (swine flu) in English and Spanish is available on the Contra Costa Health Services website: www.cchealth.org and on CCHS' Health Emergency Information Line at 1-888-959-9911.