



Department of Health & Human Services
Public Health Division

Swine Flu: Information for Concerned Parents and Caregivers May 4, 2009

Because this is a new virus, the information in this document may change as we learn more about this new virus. Watch for updated information from Colusa Public Health and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

What is swine flu (H1N1)?

Swine flu usually occurs in pigs. Now a new type of swine flu is causing illness in people.

Are people in California sick with swine flu?

Yes, there are cases of swine flu in people in California, other U.S. states, Mexico and throughout the world. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), with local and state health departments, are responding to the situation.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

Yes. Swine flu is contagious and is spreading from human to human. At this time, it is unknown how easily the virus spreads between people.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu?

The symptoms of swine flu are like the symptoms of regular flu:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches and headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea and vomiting (less common)

Young children may not have typical symptoms, but may have difficulty breathing and low activity. Little is known about how swine flu may affect children. However, so far the infection appears to be similar to other flu infections. Flu infections tend to be more severe in children with chronic medical conditions.

How do you catch swine flu?

Swine flu spreads from one person to another by coughing or sneezing, just like regular seasonal flu. Sometimes people may get the flu by touching surfaces with flu viruses on them, and then touching their eyes, mouth, or nose without washing their hands.

How do I protect my child from getting it?

There is no vaccine right now to protect against swine flu. You can take these everyday steps to stay healthy:

- Teach your children to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cough and sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of their elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.



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- Teach your children to stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.
- Children who are sick should stay home from school and daycare and stay away from other people until they are better.
- In communities where swine flu has occurred, stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters, or other places where there are large groups of people.

What to do if your child is sick:

- Unless they need medical attention, keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school or daycare.
- If your child has asthma or other chronic medical problem and develops flu symptoms (see the question above about swine flu symptoms), contact your child's doctor.
- Have them drink a lot of liquid (juice, water, Pedialyte® or similar generics).
- Keep the sick child comfortable. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat, and muscle aches, you can use fever-reducing medicines that your doctor recommends based on your child's age. Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- If someone in your home is sick, keep him or her away from those who are not sick.
- Keep tissues close to the sick person and have a trash bag within reach for disposing used tissues.
- If your child comes in contact with someone with swine flu, ask your doctor if he or she should receive antiviral medicines to prevent getting sick from swine flu.

If your child experiences any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that he or she does not want to be held
- Passing little or no urine, or no tears when crying
- Their symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

For further information, please see the following websites or call Colusa County Department of Public Health at 530-458-0380.

Colusa County Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://www.colusacountydhhs.org>

California Department of Public Health:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/news/Pages/SwineFluLndingPg042409.aspx>

This document was adapted from a CDC information bulletin.