



Swine Influenza Fact Sheet

What is Swine Influenza?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease typically seen in pigs caused by type A influenza. Occasionally human infections with swine flu do occur. The cases recently found in San Diego and Imperial Counties are a new strain of virus, which contains properties from four different virus sources: North American swine influenza viruses, North American avian influenza viruses, human influenza viruses and swine influenza viruses found in Asia and Europe.

How was this new flu strain found?

The recently diagnosed cases in Imperial and San Diego Counties were found through routine surveillance programs conducted through the Imperial and San Diego County Public Health Departments. Intensive surveillance in both counties is likely to have contributed to the early detection of this new strain of flu. Other U.S. States have since reported cases of swine flu. Cases have been reported internationally as well. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has called for increased surveillance nationwide, and it is expected that additional cases will be found.

What is the health department doing?

Imperial County Public Health Department is working closely with the CDC and State officials to investigate and track the recent cases. Public Health staff along with CDC and State personnel will be conducting interviews throughout the community as part of their ongoing investigation and as part of enhanced surveillance efforts.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are similar to the symptoms that accompany regular seasonal flu. These include fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, coughing, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Regular seasonal flu and other respiratory illnesses are still circulating throughout the community, so individuals who are experiencing these symptoms may be suffering from respiratory illnesses unrelated to swine flu.

The cases associated with this particular flu strain have been mild in that all of the individuals diagnosed have fully recovered, including one of which who is known to have a condition which limits the body's ability to fight off infection. Infections with even mild strains of flu virus can make an individual feel very sick.

How is this strain of flu spread?

While swine flu is normally spread through contact with pigs, at this time, there appears to have been human-to-human spread of this strain. Although rare, this is not new. Human-to-human spread of swine flu has been documented in the past. The human-to-human transmission of influenza is spread through contact with droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person during coughing and sneezing.

Are there drugs to treat this type of flu?

The seasonal flu vaccine has not been found to protect against this new strain of flu. There are antiviral drugs that can be used for treatment. Antibiotics are not effective against any virus. Antibiotics or other prescription medications should not be taken without the advice of a doctor.

What can I do?

To reduce the risk of spreading or becoming infected with this or any other type of influenza virus:

- Stay home when you are sick to avoid spreading illness to co-workers and friends.
- Children with flu-like symptoms should stay home to avoid spreading illness to classmates and staff.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissues.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to get rid of most germs and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water and getting adequate rest and exercise.

What should I do if I get sick?

Individuals who become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, may want to contact their health care provider, particularly if they are worried about their symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

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
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Can I get this virus from eating pork?

No. There is no evidence that this flu can be contracted from eating pork. Keep in mind, for food safety, the recommendation has always been that all pork products should be fully cooked.