



FACT SHEET

Swine Influenza

What is it?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease that causes regular flu outbreaks in pigs. A new form of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus has been identified in humans. It is contagious and is spreading from human to human. There is concern that this new strain of swine influenza may have pandemic potential. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people. Businesses need to consider preparing for an outbreak, for further information see [Business Continuity Planning](#)

Where and how has it spread?

This swine influenza virus is suspected to be spread in the same way as seasonal flu – mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infections have now been confirmed in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Europe and New Zealand but the situation continues to evolve rapidly. For regular updates visit the [World Health Organization](#).

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhoea and vomiting associated with swine flu.

Previously, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How can it be treated and prevented?

Current information suggests that antiviral drugs (including Tamiflu and Relenza) are useful against these swine influenza viruses. These drugs are readily available through pharmacists and can be prescribed by GPs.

It is not expected that the Australian seasonal influenza vaccine will provide protection against this new strain of

influenza virus. Scientists worldwide are working to develop a suitable human vaccine against swine influenza A (H1N1), however a vaccine is not expected to become available in the near future.

What you can do to stay healthy.

There are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the rubbish after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

- Influenza is thought to spread mainly person to person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

Who to contact?

If you have returned from the United States, Mexico or Canada within the last 7 days, and are feeling unwell with any flu-like symptoms, such as cough, fever, headache, joint aches and pains, fatigue, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea, please contact your local Public Health Unit, General Practitioner, or go to your nearest hospital emergency department and tell them that you have recently returned from overseas and may have flu.

Department of Health and Ageing swine influenza information hotline: 1802007.

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