

WHAT IS SWINE FLU

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Swine flu is an illness that usually infects pigs (swine). It causes a respiratory ailment and is very contagious. Luckily it is rarely fatal. It circulates among pigs throughout the year, but it is most common during the late fall and winter, similar to the human flu season.

Typically, humans do not get swine flu. The virus that affected people in 2009 has mutated into a combination of swine, avian (bird) and human influenza and it has developed a capacity of passing from human to human. It is now known as pandemic H1N1 influenza.

The symptoms of H1N1 swine flu are similar to those of the seasonal flu and include fever, body aches, cough, sore throat, headache, fatigue, occasionally vomiting and diarrhea.

H1N1 swine flu is a virus just like any other strain of flu, but it does appear to respond to the antiviral medications Tamiflu and Relenza. These medicines do not cure the disease, but they may shorten the duration, make symptoms less severe or help you avoid it altogether if you are exposed.

There is an H1N1 swine flu vaccine that has been manufactured and began shipping to locations in Ukraine in November 2009. It is a separate vaccine and it has been extensively tested and found to be both safe and effective against the H1N1 swine flu virus.

Laboratory testing in Ukraine has confirmed pandemic H1N1 influenza virus in samples taken from patients in two of the most affected regions. As the pandemic virus has rapidly become the dominant influenza strain worldwide, it can be assumed that most cases of influenza in Ukraine are caused by the H1N1 virus.

We know for sure that sniffing, coughing, muscle and headache, photophobia and high body temperature is influenza (flu), a common disease. It is known to be relatively easy to treat but, nonetheless, it requires strict medical surveillance to avoid severe complication including pneumonia, meningitis, renal failure, otitis etc. This illness also demands self control and certain actions that everybody can afford.

One should also remember: it is impossible to get infected with H1N1 swine flu from eating pork or pork products. Swine flu is a respiratory virus and is not carried in the meat of animals. Properly cooked pork and pork products are safe to eat.

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