

LEWIS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH



Always Working For a Safer and Healthier Community

Swine Flu Facts

What is Swine Flu?

- Swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is a new strain of respiratory influenza
- Although this new virus is called “swine flu” it *is not transmitted from eating pork products.*
- Like other respiratory diseases, it is spread from person to person through coughs and sneezes.

Precautions

- As with any infectious disease that is spread through the human respiratory system, health officials recommended the following precautions:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it;
 - Wash your hands with soap and water frequently, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective;
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people;
 - If you get sick, stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them;
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Symptoms

- Human symptoms for this new type of swine flu are similar to the symptoms of the regular “seasonal” influenza that happens each year.
- Symptoms include: **fever, cough and sore throat.**
- In addition, fatigue, lack of appetite, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea have been reported.

Treatment

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent swine flu, but there are medications to help treat it.
- Whether a person with influenza needs to take one of these medicines is a decision that must be made by the patient and their health care provider.

More Information

- Washington State Department of Health www.doh.wa.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hotline at **1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)**

Swine Flu Facts: Additional Questions and Answers

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash 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. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

- Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
 - Wash with soap and warm water for 15-20 seconds (the length of the Happy Birthday song).
 - If soap and water is not available, clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner and rub your hands together until the gel is dry.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

- If you are sick:
 - STAY HOME.
 - Limit your contact with other people as much as possible.
 - Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and wash hands often.

What should I do if I get sick?

- If you live in areas where swine influenza cases have been identified and 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, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms
- If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.
- Call your health care provider. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

Can people catch swine flu from eating pork?

- No. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You can not get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe.