

SWINE FLU ADVISORY

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Swine influenza (swine flu) refers to influenza caused by any virus of the family Orthomyxoviridae, which is endemic to pig (swine) populations. Strains endemic in swine are called swine influenza virus (SIV). People who work with poultry and swine, especially people with intense exposures, are at risk of infection from these animals if the animals carry a strain that is also able to infect humans. SIV can mutate into a form that allows it to pass from human to human. The strain responsible for the 2009 swine flu outbreak is believed to have undergone this mutation.

In humans, the symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of influenza and of influenza such as **fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue**. A few patients have also reported **diarrhea and vomiting**.

Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. The Virus has an incubation period of seven days. Swine flu cannot be spread by pork products, since the virus is not transmitted through food. The swine flu in humans is most contagious during the first five days of the illness although some people, most commonly children, can remain contagious for up to ten days.

A diagnosis of confirmed swine flu can be confirmed by laboratory testing of a respiratory sample (a simple nose and throat swab).

On present evidence, the overwhelming majority of patients experience mild symptoms and make a rapid and full recovery, often in the absence of any form of medical treatment.

For the current outbreak, it is recommended patients be treated with Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and Zanamivir (Relenza) to avoid drug resistance. If a person gets sick, antiviral drugs can make the illness milder and make the patient feel better faster. They may also prevent serious complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

Prevention

Presently No vaccine is available for use in the current outbreak. Standard personal precautions against influenza include frequent washing of hands with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after being out in-public. People should avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes with their hands unless they've washed their hands. If people do cough, they should either cough into a tissue and throw it in the garbage immediately, cough into their elbow, or, if they cough in their hand, they should wash their hands immediately. Influenza spreads mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. **It is recommended that sick persons stay home away from work and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.**

Current Outbreak of Swine influenza

Cases have been reported from United States of America, Mexico, Canada, UK, Spain and some other countries including India . After considering available data on confirmed outbreaks of A/H1N1 swine influenza from these countries, WHO has recommended following:

1. **WHO has raised the level of influenza pandemic alert from the current phase 5 to phase 6.** The change indicates that the H1N1 Influenza pandemic has started and further spread is considered inevitable.
2. WHO recommended not to close borders and not to restrict international travel?
3. It was considered prudent for people who are ill to delay international travel and for people developing symptoms following international travel to seek medical attention.

Preventive Measures for Swine Flu

These are Universal Precaution measures for any airborne respiratory infections.

1. Stay home if you are sick
2. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
3. Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes.
4. Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue or cough into your upper sleeve.
5. Cover your Nose/Mouth if anyone around is coughing/sneezing.
6. Avoid shaking hands and always wash your hands after physical contact with others.
7. Keep frequently touched surfaces clean (telephone, desks, office equipments etc)
8. Limit unnecessary visitors.

Kasturba Hospital, Sane Guruji Marg, Mumbai-11, Maharashtra

{ Isolation and critical care }

[Dr. Umesh Aigal – 09820935680,

022-23083901, 02,03,04]

Dr. Naidu Infectious Disease Hospital,

Pune, Maharashtra

{ Isolation and critical care }

[Dr. Barathe – 09923130909]

9. Maintain a healthy lifestyle; attention to rest, diet, and exercise and relaxation helps maintain good physical and emotional health.
10. Avoid crowded places where risk of transmission of any airborne infection is high.
11. Avoid unnecessary travel to Swine Flu affected International / domestic destinations.
12. If travel to Swine Flu High Risk areas required, use a Face Mask (N-95 WHO approved for Swine Flu)
13. If one has Flu like symptoms and suspect that there has been contact with Swine Flu patient, then contact the Company Doctors in Mumbai immediately.
14. For more Information on Swine Flu, log on to the Ministry of Health, Govt. of India site: <http://mohfw.nic.in/SWINEFLU.htm>. Information about Nodal Centres all over the country is available on this Site.
15. The Nodal designated Centres for diagnosis and treatment of Swine Flu in Mumbai & Pune are given below: