



Louisiana State University
and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Office of Occupational & Environmental Safety

Date: April 29, 2009

RE: Influenza H1N1 (Swine Flu virus)

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of the flu come on suddenly and are worse than those of the common cold. They may include

- Body or muscle aches
- Chills
- Cough
- Fever
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

There are antiviral medicines you can take to prevent or treat swine flu. There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. You can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza by

- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. You can also use alcohol-based hand cleaners.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Trying to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Staying home from work or school if you are sick.

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85sD83aRUIQ>

Questions and Answers

- Ⓢ How can human infections with swine influenza be diagnosed?

To diagnose swine influenza A infection, a respiratory specimen would generally need to be collected within the first 4 to 5 days of illness (when an infected person is most likely to be shedding virus). However, some persons, especially children, may shed virus for 10 days or longer. Identification as a swine flu influenza A virus requires sending the specimen to CDC for laboratory testing.

- Ⓢ What medications are available to treat swine flu infections in humans?

There are four different antiviral drugs that are licensed for use in the US for the treatment of influenza: amantadine, rimantadine, oseltamivir and zanamivir. While most swine influenza viruses have been susceptible to all four drugs, the most recent swine influenza viruses isolated from humans are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. At this time, CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses. Antiviral medications are prescription drugs. Initially, they may be obtained from a pharmacy with a regular prescription. There is a national stockpile of antiviral medication. Every state has access to the national stockpile and antivirals will be distributed on a per-capita basis.

- Ⓢ What is the difference between an antiviral and a vaccine?

Antivirals are drugs used for the prevention and early treatment of influenza. If taken shortly after getting sick (within 48 hours), they can reduce influenza symptoms, shorten the length of illness and potentially reduce the serious complications of influenza. Antivirals work by reducing the ability of the virus to reproduce but do not provide immunity against the virus. The human swine influenza H1N1 can be treated with two different antivirals, oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza). A vaccine is any preparation intended to produce immunity to a disease by stimulating the production of antibodies. Vaccines are the primary means to prevent illness and death from influenza. They stimulate the production of antibodies against the flu virus components included in the vaccine, providing immunity against the virus. In order to provide the best protection, a vaccine must be tailored to fight off specific strains of influenza.

- Ⓢ If this develops into a pandemic, how long will it take for a vaccine to protect against it?

There is a plan for a vaccine to be produced domestically if a pandemic occurs. Once the virus is identified, it takes about six months for an effective vaccine to be developed and tested. Enough pandemic vaccine will be produced to cover all Americans.

- Ⓢ Is the H1N1 swine flu virus the same as human H1N1 viruses?

No. The H1N1 swine flu viruses are antigenically very different from human H1N1 viruses and, therefore, vaccines for human seasonal flu would not provide protection from H1N1 swine flu viruses.

- Ⓢ I got my flu shot this year. Will it protect me against human swine influenza?

This year's annual influenza immunization, or flu shot, protects against the human strain of H1N1 influenza. The human swine influenza H1N1 strain is different than the human strain. It is unlikely that the seasonal flu shot will provide protection against human swine influenza. The flu shot will protect against the seasonal flu, which is still circulating in Mexico.

- Ⓢ If I have travelled to an affected area and I'm feeling sick, what should I do?

If you have travelled to an affected area and you become sick with flu-like symptoms - especially respiratory symptoms such as, fever and cough or difficulty breathing - see your doctor and tell him or her that you have recently travelled to those areas.

- Ⓢ What should I do if I get sick while I am travelling?

If you develop symptoms while you are travelling, seek care from local health care professionals.

- Ⓢ What should I do if I feel sick when I am supposed to fly or travel by train or bus?

If you have symptoms of illness, see a doctor before boarding an airplane or other forms of public transportation. If you become sick while at the airport, consult airport officials before boarding the airplane.

- ④ If someone has the flu or a cold and coughs into his hand, and then he touches a doorknob, how long can those germs live on that doorknob?

The length of time that cold or flu germs can survive outside the body on an environmental surface, such as a doorknob, varies greatly. But the suspected range is from a few seconds to 48 hours — depending on the specific virus and the type of surface.

Flu viruses tend to live longer on surfaces than cold viruses do. Also, it's generally believed that cold and flu viruses live longer on nonporous surfaces — such as plastic, metal or wood — than they do on porous surfaces — such as fabrics, skin or paper.

Although cold and flu viruses primarily spread from person-to-person contact, you can also become infected from contact with contaminated surfaces. The best way to avoid becoming infected with a cold or flu is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water or with an alcohol-based sanitizer.

FACTS

- This is a new strain of flu that consists of a mixture of genetic material from swine, avian and human influenza viruses.
- Appropriate disinfectants:
 - 70% Ethanol
 - 5% Lysol
 - 10% Bleach
- There is no evidence at this time that swine in the United States are infected with this virus strain and therefore, this is not an animal health or food safety issue.
- A network of Federal veterinarians, state animal health officials and private practitioners are regularly involved with monitoring U.S. swine for signs of significant disease. To date, there have been no reports that the influenza virus currently causing illness in humans is circulating anywhere in the U.S. swine herd.
- Commercial pork producers are encouraged to intensify the bio-security practices they've long had in place. They should not loan equipment or vehicles to or borrow them from other farms. Swine from outside sources, such as transitional herds should not be brought back to the farm. Transitional herd is the term we use to define those herds that have some likelihood of

contact with feral swine. They should permit only essential workers and vehicles to enter the farm. Swine workers should disinfect their shoes, clothes and hands. They should thoroughly clean and disinfect equipment and vehicles entering and leaving the farm and avoid visiting other livestock farms without proper cleaning and disinfection. Also, they should report sick animals immediately. The industry understands the importance of preventing spread of the virus as quickly as possible to protect the industry.