



SWINE FLU FAQ

YANN A. MEUNIER, MD

Director, Stanford Health Promotion Network

DR. CHRISTINE GABALI

*Education, Health, Training and Career Advancement
Residential and Dining Enterprises*



Stanford Prevention Research Center
Stanford University School of Medicine



INTRODUCTION

GOALS

- » Know the scientific facts
- » Take appropriate action
- » Avoid panic and complacency

*Our awareness and efficient actions are
the main weapons against viruses!*

WHAT IS “SWINE FLU”?

- Flu is a disease caused by the influenza virus. Humans, pigs, birds and other animals can be infected by influenza viruses. Typically, influenza viruses infect only one species
- However, some viruses can swap genes, creating new ones that have a mix of human, pig, and bird viruses genes.
- The current “swine flu” virus has some genes from pig flu and others from bird flu viruses.
- This flu pandemic is due to the H1N1 Influenza A virus

IS THE SWINE FLU DANGEROUS?

- Yes, and while we don't want to over-react, we also don't want to be non-responsive or take this issue too lightly
- One reason this illness is more severe is that the virus is new and people have no immunity against it
- The regular flu coming each year is caused by a human influenza virus with (often) similarities to those that caused the flu in the past. So, people have some degree of immunity from exposure to previous viruses
- For unknown reasons, so far, the mortality rate seems much higher in Mexico than in the US

HOW BAD CAN THE SITUATION GET?

- ✓ The worst influenza pandemic was in 1918-1919. It killed 70-100 million people worldwide (more than world war II)
- ✓ It affected more than 1 billion people (more than half of the world population)
- ✓ 20% of people got sick
- ✓ 2.5 to 5% people died
- ✓ Other influenza pandemics have been much less serious

HOW IS THE VIRUS TRANSMITTED?

- The new swine flu virus can be transmitted between humans unlike previous swine flu viruses
- Transmission is made by sneezing, coughing and skin-to-skin contact (shaking hands, kissing, ...)
- Incubation period: 7 days
- Contaminating distance: 6 feet

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Fever
- Muscle and joint aches
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (which may be more common than with the regular flu)

HOW SERIOUS IS THE SWINE FLU?

- More at risk are:
 - Pregnant women
 - Young children
 - Seniors

- Symptoms considered serious are:
In adults, teens and kids:
 - * Shortness of breath
 - * Persistent vomiting
 - * Confusion
 - * Dizziness

HOW SERIOUS IS THE SWINE FLU?

In children under 2 :

- * High fever
 - * Rapid breathing
 - * Not interacting normally
 - * Not eating or drinking as usual
 - * Irritability
 - * Sleepiness
 - * Skin rash
 - * Bluish color of the lips and/or skin
- Death may happen. It is worrisome that in Mexico young healthy adults have died
- However, the current H1N1 strain lacks a sequence of genes that made the 1918 flu strain so deadly

HOW IS THE H1N1 FLU DIAGNOSED?

- A respiratory specimen (nose or throat) needs to be collected within the first 4 to 5 days of illness for adults and up to 10 days after the start of the illness for children (when the person is more contagious)
- Identifying the H1N1 flu virus requires sending the specimen to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for laboratory testing

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENTS?

- Two antiviral medicines are efficient:
 - * Oseltamivir (Tamiflu*)
 - * Zanamivir (Relenza*)
- They must be taken within 2 days of when the symptoms first occur

Note: These 2 drugs can also be used for prevention against the swine flu

HOW LONG ARE SICK PEOPLE CONTAGIOUS?

- Adults:
 - At least 7 days after the start of symptoms
- Children:
 - 10 to 14 days after the start of symptoms

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AND OTHERS?

Yourself

- Wash your hands frequently (for at least 20 seconds)
- Don't shake hands or exchange kisses
- Avoid contact with people with flu symptoms

Others

- If you develop sneezing and coughing:
 - Use paper tissues to wipe your nose and cover your mouth
 - Throw the used tissues in the trash or toilet bowl
 - Wash your hands again
 - If no tissues are available, cough or sneeze on the upper part of your sleeve
- A human vaccine will not be available in the near future

CAN I GET IT FROM EATING PORK?

- Absolutely not
- Nevertheless, thoroughly cook pork (>160 degrees F) to avoid other illnesses

WILL THERE BE RESTRICTIONS ON OUR LIFESTYLE?

The government may require:

- Travel restriction, for some period
- Closure of schools and public places
- As many people as possible to work from home
- People who develop symptoms:
 - To stay at home
 - To isolate themselves to prevent the spreading of the disease
- People who develop serious symptoms:
 - To seek immediate medical attention

ARE THERE PREVENTIVE MEASURES AT STANFORD?

Interim Policy Guidance for Return to Work for Faculty and Staff Returning from Travel in Mexico (April 30, 2009)

(Applies to all faculty and staff except those working in Residential Dining & Eating)

- For seven (7) consecutive days after returning home, you should take your temperature each morning prior to going to work. You may come to work if you do NOT have an elevated temperature (>100 degrees F) accompanied by any of the following: runny nose, sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough
- If you DO have an elevated temperature accompanied by any of these symptoms, do NOT come to work. You should contact your health care provider, describe your symptoms, and tell them you have recently returned from Mexico. You should coordinate your return to work with your supervisor after receiving a medical release from your health care provider
- If after seven (7) consecutive days you have no day of elevated temperature, then you can stop taking your temperature each morning
- In addition, if you have not yourself traveled to Mexico but have been in close contact with others who have recently been in Mexico, you are asked to follow the above precautions

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

For updated information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>

Regularly check the Stanford Home Page for further information on Swine Flu and Stanford-specific guidance:

<http://www.stanford.edu>

Lucile Packard Children's Hospital swine flu health tips:

In English: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5psTRgwK8m0>

In Spanish: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ9wFKBWTXE&>;

For emergencies, call:

(650) 725 5555

Toll free: (800) 897 4253

International: 01 602 241 6769