

Swine Flu Quick Reference

Symptoms of the Common Cold Versus the Flu

Symptom	Cold	Flu
Onset	Gradual worsening of symptoms over several days	Sudden onset of symptoms within 3 to 6 hours
Fever	Rare	Common but not always present. Temperature above 100°F for several days
Body Ache/ Joint Pain	Mild if present	Moderate to severe
Chest Discomfort	Mild	Moderate to severe
Sore Throat	Common	Common
Fatigue	Mild	Moderate to severe
Sneezing/Runny Nose	Common	Rare
Headache	Rare	Common
Vomiting and Diarrhea	Rare	Occasionally, especially in young children
Coughing	Wet, hacking cough. Produces mucus.	Dry cough initially. May develop into productive cough after a few days.
Stuffy Nose	Common	Rare

Contagion

- Swine flu is very contagious and is spread via contact with infected surfaces or exposure to airborne droplets.
- An actively coughing flu patient is infectious to others within a ten foot radius.
- Patients are infectious during the time from onset of symptoms up to one week after symptoms subside. Any person still coughing should be considered infectious.

Prevention

- The primary prevention is social distancing. Avoid crowded public spaces. Isolate sick family members from the healthy.
- Wearing masks outside of health care setting has not proved effective. Masks may actually harbor virus in a moist and warm environment which increases risk of infection.
- If a family member becomes ill with the flu, contact your family doctor regarding Tamiflu regimen for your entire family.

Vaccination

- Seasonal flu vaccine is believed to reduce symptoms and/or severity of swine flu.
- Once available, swine flu vaccine will yield maximum immunity two to three weeks after administration in adults and older children. At this time, it appears children under approximately 10 years will require two shots so maximum immunity will be achieved six weeks after first shot.
- In general, flu shots are only effective in 70% to 80% of those vaccinated so prevention will remain important even after vaccine becomes available.

Individuals At Risk for Complications

Anyone in these risk groups should talk to their doctor about swine flu.

- Women who are pregnant or have delivered within the last 30 days. During pregnancy, the immune system is suppressed so susceptibility to the flu and it's complications is increased.
- Asthmatics, those with emphysema, COPD, or significant heart problems. Swine flu seems to settle in the lungs to a greater extent than seasonal flu. This can stress those with any condition where the lungs are already compromised by further reducing the exchange of oxygen.
- Oncology patients, AIDS, or others with compromised immune systems.
- Obesity is a relative indication of risk. There is no established link between obesity and hospitalization for swine flu in the absence of other underlying health problems.

Preparation

It remains unknown how severely the flu will disrupt everyday life. At a minimum, plan on the health system to be overwhelmed by flu patients, the “worried well”, and short staffing due to illness. This will mean access to your doctor or the ER will be delayed if not impossible. Everyone should be prepared to treat themselves and their families at home.

The best resource is a freely available download called [Good Home Treatment of Influenza](#) by Dr. Grattan Woodson, MD. This was written in response to the threat of the bird flu (H5N1) but is accurate for the treatment of swine flu (H1N1). Download and save a copy at home. Take time to read the first sections of the book and obtain the recommended medications and supplies. Don't delay getting supplies as they will disappear from shelves as the flu ramps up.

Anyone living alone should arrange reliable friends or co-workers to check on them regularly should they become ill.

There is a possibility that enough workers will be out sick or tending their families that the supply chain for groceries might be disrupted. Have at least three days supply of food and water for your family at home.

Also, have at least a two week supply of any prescription medicines at home.

Further tips on home treatment:

- Hydration is a high priority in treating the flu. Study those sections of the flu book to recognize the signs of dehydration and be aggressive in hydrating flu patients who may be resistant.
- Gatorade (original, not low cal) is good for hydration of children and adults although not quite as good as the re-hydrating solution recommended in Dr. Grattan's book. Stick to Pedialyte or Dr. Grattan's solution for newborns and infants.
- Avoid multi-symptom cold and flu products like Nyquil. The combination of ingredients are not optimal and can lead to overdose, especially in children. Use medications to target specific symptoms.
- Mild fever is a good thing when fighting flu. Don't medicate low grade fevers.
- Fever reducing medicines (antipyretics) will not work in a patient who is dehydrated.
- A productive cough is good, don't suppress it. Medicate only dry cough.

Other Resources

- [US Government Flu Information](http://www.flu.gov)
<http://www.flu.gov>
- [CDC Swine Flu Site](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- [Fairfax County Swine Flu Site](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu/)
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu/>
- [Loudoun County Swine Flu Site](http://www.loudoun.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=652)
<http://www.loudoun.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=652>
- [Montgomery County Swine Flu Site](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/swine_flu/index.asp)
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/swine_flu/index.asp

Hard Core Information

For those interested:

- <http://www.fluwikie.com/>
- <http://www.flutrackers.com/forum/>