

What is swine flu?

Swine Flu is a lung disease of pigs caused by a pig influenza virus. Swine flu viruses cause much sickness but few deaths in pigs. Swine flu viruses can cause sickness in pigs at any time of the year. However, most outbreaks in pig herds happen during the late fall and winter months, just like human flu. Swine flu was first diagnosed in a pig in 1930.

Pigs infected with swine flu may seem tired and have a runny nose, cough and poor appetite. Illness probably spreads from pig to pig through infected snout drainage.

How common is swine flu among pigs?

Swine flu viruses are found often in pig groups in the United States. Large numbers of pigs usually become sick in cold, weather months (late fall and winter) and sometimes when new pigs are added to herds. Experts estimate that about 50 percent of pigs in the North-Central U.S. have been infected with swine flu. Swine flu is common in pig herds around the world.

Can people catch swine flu?

Swine flu viruses do **not** usually infect people. CDC gets only about one report of swine flu virus in a person each year. Usually, these infections happen in people who have contact with pigs (farmers who have pig herds, for example). There have been rare cases of one person spreading swine flu to people.

The symptoms of swine flu in people are the same as seasonal human flu and include a fever with a cough and/or sore throat, body aches, and tiredness. You can also become infected with swine flu and never have symptoms. Blood tests may determine whether you have ever been infected with swine flu. People may be at risk for complications from flu (like pneumonia) especially those who are very young, elderly or have some medical conditions and these people should get a flu shot every year.

How does swine flu spread?

Swine flu spreads from sick animals to well animals and rarely from sick animals to people. Swine flu rarely spreads from person to person.

Is there a vaccine for swine flu?

There is a vaccine for pigs. There is no human vaccine because people do not become sick with swine flu very often. The seasonal flu vaccine will give some protection against one type of swine flu but not all.

How many swine flu viruses are there?

There is more than one type of swine flu. Like all flu viruses, swine flu viruses change often.

Why are public health officials concerned about swine flu?

Anytime an animal-type flu or unusual flu strain causes illness in a person health officials investigate to determine the source of infection and whether the illness has spread from person to person. Any new influenza virus that spreads easily from person to person and causes sickness has the potential to become a threat to human health.