

# **H1N1 Influenza Information**

## **What Is Swine Flu?**

Swine flu is an illness that usually infects pigs (swine). It causes a respiratory illness that is very contagious but is rarely fatal. It circulates among pigs throughout the year, but is most common during the late fall and winter, similar to the human flu season. This strain of influenza has caused significant concern because it has combined with two other influenza strains to cause a new influenza (H1N1 flu) never seen before 2009 in humans. The following information is what we presently know about this new flu virus known as H1N1 flu however the information is regularly changing and updated frequently.

## **Why Are Humans Getting H1N1 Swine Flu?**

The H1N1 2009 influenza is a new type of flu that infects humans. It developed from a combination of 3 types of flu viruses. The virus that is affecting people in 2009 seems to have mutated into a combination of swine, avian (bird) and human influenza A and has developed the capability of passing from human to human. It is now known as pandemic H1N1 influenza. The H1N1 outbreak occurred at the end of the usual flu season in 2009. The outbreak was much unexpected and health agencies became alarmed because of this new flu and lack of information known about it.

## **How Do Humans Get H1N1 flu?**

This flu, like all flu, is passed from human to human by inhaling or touching the virus. When a person with the flu coughs or sneezes near you, you can get the virus by inhaling the infected air. You can also get it by shaking hands with someone who has the flu. A person can also give you the flu if they cough or sneeze on a surface and you touch the surface and your infected hands touch your nose or mouth. Because your hands are one of the most common ways to transmit the virus, it is important for you to wash your hands frequently.

You cannot get swine flu from eating pork or pork products. Swine flu is a respiratory virus and is not carried in the meat of animals. Properly cooked pork and pork products are safe to eat.

## **What are the Symptoms of H1N1 Swine Flu?**

Symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to those of the seasonal flu but may come on faster and may be slightly more intense and include:

- Fever
- Body aches
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Occasionally vomiting and diarrhea
- Nasal congestion
- Chills

