

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Telegrams “AFYA”
Tel: 255-22-2120261 General
(All letters should be addressed
to the Permanent Secretary)



P.O. Box 9083,
DAR ES SALAAM.

SWINE FLU

What is Swine Influenza?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza in pigs. Swine flu viruses cause high levels of illness and low death rates in pigs. Swine influenza viruses may circulate among swine throughout the year, but most outbreaks occur during the late fall and winter months similar to outbreaks in humans. The classical swine flu virus (an influenza type A H1N1 virus) was first isolated from a pig in 1930.

How many swine flu viruses are there?

Over the years, different variations of swine flu viruses have emerged. At this time, there are four main influenza type A virus subtypes that have been isolated in pigs: H1N1, H1N2, H3N2, and H3N1. However, most of the recently isolated influenza viruses from pigs have been H1N1 viruses.

Like all influenza viruses, swine flu viruses change constantly. Pigs can be infected by avian influenza and human influenza viruses as well as swine influenza viruses. When influenza viruses from different species infect pigs, the viruses can reassort (i.e. swap genes) and new viruses that are a mix of swine, human and/or avian influenza viruses can emerge.

Swine Flu in Humans

Can humans catch swine flu?

Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with swine flu have occurred. Most commonly, these cases occur in persons with direct exposure to pigs. In addition, there have been documented cases of human to human transmission of the swine flu.

What are the symptoms of swine flu in humans?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human [seasonal influenza](#) and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Can people catch swine flu from eating pork?

Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products are safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

How does swine flu spread?

Influenza viruses can be directly transmitted from pigs to people and from people to pigs. Human infection with flu viruses from pigs are most likely to occur when people are in close proximity to infected pigs. Human-to-human transmission of swine flu can also occur. This is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu occurs in people, which is mainly person-to-person transmission through coughing or sneezing of people infected with the influenza virus. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

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 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 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, it is recommended the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

How can human infections with swine influenza be prevented?

General preventive measures for influenza:

- Avoid close contact with people who appear unwell and who have fever and cough.
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently and thoroughly.
- Practice good health habits including adequate sleep, eating nutritious food, and keeping physically active.

If there is an ill person at home:

- Try to provide the ill person a separate section in the house. If this is not possible keep the patient at least 1 meter in distance from others.

- Cover mouth and nose when caring for the ill person.
- Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly after each contact with the ill person.
- Try to improve the air flow in the area where the ill person stays. Use doors and windows to take advantage of breezes.
- Keep the environment clean with readily available household cleaning agents.

What should I do if I am in regular contact with pigs?

Even though there is no clear indication that the current human cases with swine influenza infection are related to recent or ongoing influenza-like disease events in pigs, it would be advisable to minimize contact with sick pigs and report such animals to relevant animal health authorities

Most people are infected through prolonged, close contact with infected pigs. Good hygiene practices are essential in all contact with animals and are especially important during slaughter and post-slaughter handling to prevent exposure to disease agents. Sick animals or animals that died from disease should not be undergoing slaughtering procedures.