



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
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Commissioner

HOME ISOLATION

Instructions for Suspected, Probable and Confirmed Swine Influenza Cases

Dear Patient,

You are suspected of having or were diagnosed recently with swine influenza (swine flu). Influenza can be transmitted when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is also possible to become infected by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus, and then touching your own nose or mouth. Covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub are essential in stopping the spread of influenza.

During the period that you have symptoms, especially fever, it is possible for you to transmit this virus to those who have close contact with you (for example, someone living with or caring for you). To help prevent transmission of influenza virus to your close contacts, the Health Department is requesting that you **stay at home for 7 days after the day you developed a fever or 24-48 hours after all symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.** During that time, please follow these guidelines:

YOU SHOULD:

Stay at home for 7 days after the first day of fever or at least 24-48 hours after all symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.

- Contact with others should be limited as much as possible; avoid close contact such as kissing, do not share toothbrushes, cigarettes or drinks with non-infected persons. Persons living in the home with you should limit contact with you to the extent possible. Consider designating one person (not someone who is pregnant) as the primary person who will care for you while you're sick.
- If possible, stay in a room separate from the common areas of the house. (For example, a spare bedroom, if that's possible.)
- ALWAYS cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose and ALWAYS wash your hands with soap or water or use alcohol-based hand rubs after coughing or sneezing or throwing a used tissue in the garbage. Throw out your used tissues with your regular garbage. Do not touch your nose, face or eyes after coughing or sneezing.
- While the virus is likely not spread very well from contact with soiled household surfaces, if any of your body fluids (such as secretions from your nose or mouth, urine, vomit or stool) gets on surfaces in your home (such as door knobs or any other object that you sneeze or cough on), the surface should be washed with any standard household cleaner or disinfectant. Rinse the surface with tap water afterwards, and be sure to wash your hands after cleaning the area.
- Dirty dishes and eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. Separation of eating utensils for use by a patient with influenza is not necessary.
- Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. It is not necessary to separate soiled linen and laundry used by a patient with influenza from other household laundry.

HOME ISOLATION - Instructions for Suspect, Probable and Confirmed Swine Influenza Cases (cont)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLOSE CONTACTS:

- Other household members should monitor themselves closely for the development of influenza-like symptoms. If they get sick with fever, cough, or sore throat, they should stay at home and take the same precautions listed above.
- Sick persons should not have visitors while they are ill with influenza or an influenza-like illness. If anyone who does not live with the patient must enter the home, they should avoid contact with the sick person.
- All persons in the household, especially those who must come in close contact with the sick person should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub frequently and after every contact with the sick person.
- If someone else is washing the used linens (such as bed sheets and towels) for the sick person, they should use household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid “hugging” laundry prior to washing it to prevent self-contamination and clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Close contacts may consider using a facemask (e.g. surgical mask) or an N95 respirator. These can be purchased at a pharmacy or hardware store. If a reusable fabric facemask is used, it should be laundered with normal laundry detergent and tumble-dried in a hot dryer.

IF I AM SICK DO I NEED TO TAKE MEDICINE?

Right now the Health Department is not recommending that people with mild illness take any special medication for swine flu. You should rest, drink plenty of liquids, and take medications that you would normally take to treat your symptoms, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. People who are under 18 years of age should NOT take aspirin or aspirin-containing products (e.g., Pepto-Bismol™), as this can cause a rare serious illness called Reye’s Syndrome in young people with the flu.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR SYMPTOMS WORSEN

If your mild symptoms worsen, for example you develop difficulty breathing, you should seek medical attention from your own medical provider or at the emergency room. If you need to go to the doctor’s office or emergency room, you should have a family member or friend drive you in a private car if at all possible, or take a taxi. Do NOT take public transportation (subway or bus). **If you go to your doctor, please contact your doctor before you leave your home and tell the doctor you have influenza-like symptoms. You should go straight to the receptionist or triage nurse when you arrive and tell them that you have arrived so that you can be put in a private room while you wait to see the doctor.** You may be asked to wear a mask. Try to sit away from others as much as possible. **If you call an ambulance to take you to the hospital, let the operator know that you have influenza-like symptoms when you call 911, and let the ambulance crew know when they arrive.**

EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS

Children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- So irritable child doesn’t want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but returns with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

Adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

SHOULD PERSONS I LIVE WITH OR OTHER CLOSE CONTACTS TAKE MEDICINE TO PREVENT SWINE FLU?

The Health Department is recommending preventive medication particularly for household or other close contacts who have an underlying condition (such as certain chronic medical conditions, being immunocompromised, being <2 or > 65 years old) that may put them at risk for more severe illness. To find out whether preventive medication such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) is recommended, call a doctor.

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

For more information, call your doctor or visit the following websites that have information about swine flu: www.cdc.gov / www.who.int / www.nyc.gov/health or call 311