



# *San Carlos Park Fire Protection and Rescue Service District*

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## SWINE INFLUENZA

In recent days the world has learned of an outbreak of disease in people caused by an influenza virus of swine origin, known as the Swine Influenza (Swine Flu). San Carlos Park Fire District along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would like to assure that you have the knowledge necessary to protect you and your family.

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. What does this mean for you? 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 (e.g. children near pigs at a fair or workers in the swine industry). In addition, there have been documented cases of one person spreading swine flu to others.

Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You can not get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Influenza viruses can be directly transmitted from pigs to people and from people to 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.

If you live in areas where swine influenza cases have been identified and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact your health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

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

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Between 2005 until January 2009, 12 human cases of swine flu were detected in the U.S. with no deaths occurring. However, swine flu infection can be serious. Currently, there are four different antiviral drugs that are licensed for use in the US 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. Your physician has options and swine influenza can be treated per your physician's orders.

So how do you protect you and your family? First and foremost, stay informed and use reliable resources for information such as <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>. Secondly, take everyday actions to stay healthy including: covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, washing your hands often with soap and water, avoiding spreading germs by not touching your eyes, nose or mouth, and staying home if you get sick. It is also recommended that you develop a family emergency plan as a precaution. This should include storing a supply of food, medicines, facemasks, alcohol-based hand rubs and other essential supplies.

For up to date information on Swine Flu please visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/swineflu/](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. Additionally, view the following podcast for more information: <http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=11226>. Thank you for taking an active role in the health and safety of you and your family. As always, if you have any questions regarding your health please contact your healthcare provider.

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