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Health Education Program

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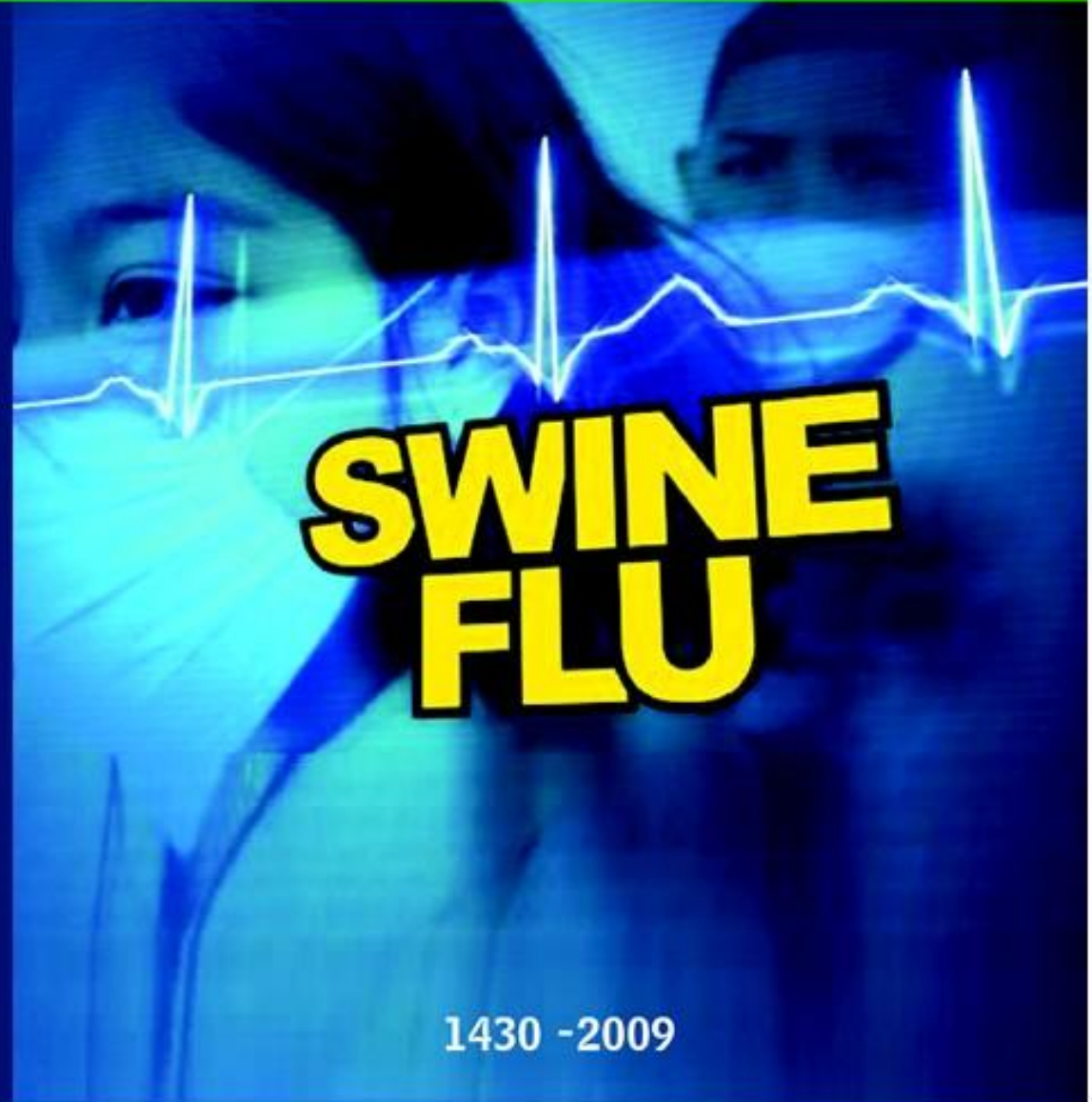
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Patient Education Material (MED 09-002)

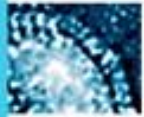
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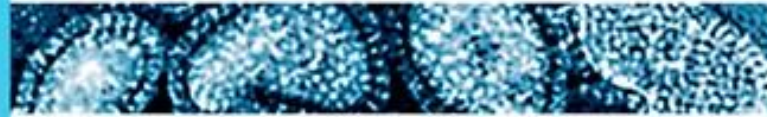
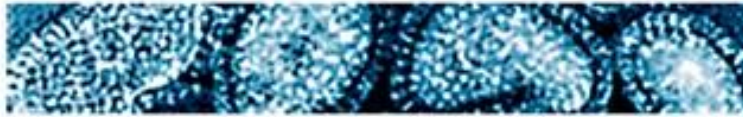
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Swine Flu



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?

Like all other types of influenza viruses, swine flu viruses change constantly. Pigs can be infected by different species of influenza viruses like pig influenza virus, avian influenza virus and human influenza virus. These various viruses can exchange genes and new types or species may emerge. 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.

How does swine flu spread from pigs to human?

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, such as in pig barns and livestock exhibits housing pigs at fairs.

Can swine flu spread from one person to another?

Human-to-human transmission of swine flu can also occur. It is thought, that it occurs in the same way as seasonal flu appears 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.

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?

No. 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 are safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F (71°C) kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

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 7 days or longer. Identification as a swine flu influenza A virus is done in Microbiology Laboratory and co-confirmed with the Ministry of Health (MOH).



What medications are available to treat swine flu infections in humans?

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 H1N1 influenza viruses isolated from humans are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. Is there any vaccine for swine flu? Vaccine is available for pigs to stop spread of swine flu among them. But there is no vaccine yet for human against swine flu. Seasonal influenza vaccine can partially against H3N2 but not against H1N1.



How to protect yourself from swine flu?

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze, or contact with someone sick with flu
2. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Discard tissues to the trash cans after using.
3. Use mask in crowded areas to stop spread of the virus like transportation buses, trains or planes.