

MYTH vs. FACT

H1N1/Swine Flu
August 12, 2009

1. I am a vegetarian so I don't need to worry about catching swine flu.

Myth. Consuming pork does not spread the H1N1 virus. Like seasonal flu, swine flu is spread person to person via respiratory droplets to mucous membranes (eyes, nose and mouth.)

2. I should take antiviral medicine now to protect me from swine flu.

Myth. You should only take an antiviral if your health care provider advises you to do so. Individuals should not buy medicines to prevent or fight this new influenza without a prescription.

3. I'm sneezing and coughing so I must have swine flu.

Myth. Coughing and sneezing alone are not generally associated with the swine flu. Symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of other flu strains including:

Fever

Cough

Sore throat

Body Aches

Headaches

Chills

Fatigue

Diarrhea

Vomiting

4. Swine flu is a combination of many viruses.

Fact. The recent outbreak of H1N1, commonly known as swine flu, involves a new influenza strain that is a genetic combination of swine, avian and human influenza viruses.

5. You can spread swine flu to others even if you feel great.

Fact. If you do have H1N1, you can give it to other about 24 hours before you develop symptoms.

6. Pregnant women are more at risk with H1N1.

Fact. H1N1 has disproportionately affected young healthy persons. Most troubling is that contracting the H1N1 virus while pregnant can cause severe and life-threatening disease. Data suggests pregnancy may put women at greater risk of developing complications from the pandemic H1N1 flu. The CDC and the WHO urge public health providers treating

pregnant women with flu-like symptoms to immediately begin appropriate antiviral therapy.

7. **I get the flu shot so I don't need the swine flu vaccine too.**

Myth. The regular flu shot does not offer protection from H1N1.

8. **Hand sanitizers don't kill the new H1N1 virus.**

Myth. Hand sanitizers have been shown to be effective at killing the H1N1 virus. When soap and water are not available, using hand sanitizers will help prevent the spread of the virus.

9. **Health officials suggest basic hygiene measures to prevent the spread of H1N1.**

Fact. Everyday actions can be taken to stay healthy:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home and limit contact with others if you get sick.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

10. **Swine flu has spread to all parts of the world.**

Fact. Since emerging last spring, H1N1 has spread to 168 countries and has led to at least 1,154 deaths.

More information about H1N1 and additional crisis materials can be found at <http://online.unitedway.org/crisis>.

Resources:

World Health Organization

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

Department of Homeland Security
Mayo Clinic