

Influenza A H3N2v

Information for the Public

What is Swine Influenza?

Swine influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that regularly cause outbreaks of influenza in pigs. Common signs in sick pigs include fever, depression, coughing (barking), discharge from the nose or eyes, sneezing, breathing difficulties, eye redness or inflammation, and going off feed. However, influenza-infected pigs also may not appear ill or be only mildly ill.

What is a variant influenza virus?

When an influenza virus that normally circulates in swine (but not people) is detected in a person, it is called a “variant influenza virus.” For example, if a swine origin influenza A H3N2 virus is detected in a person, that virus will be called an “H3N2 variant” virus or “H3N2v” virus.

How common is human infection with influenza A H3N2v?

In 2011, 12 US residents including 2 children from West Virginia were found to be infected with H3N2v. During 2012, several cases have been identified, almost exclusively in persons with direct exposure to pigs.

How influenza A H3N2v is transmitted?

H3N2v can be directly transmitted from pigs to people who are in close proximity to infected pigs, such as in pig barns and livestock exhibits housing pigs at fairs. This kind of transmission is thought to occur in the same way that seasonal flu transmits in people. Human-to-human transmission of H3N2v has occurred but it is very limited and unsustainable.

Who is most at risk from influenza A H3N2v?

The majority of recent H3N2v cases have been among young children.

What symptoms do people have when they are infected with variant viruses?

People who have been infected with H3N2v influenza virus have had symptoms similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza. These include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, and body aches. Some people also have reported nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Can people catch swine flu/variant flu from eating pork?

Swine influenza cannot be transmitted to people through eating properly handled and prepared pork (pig meat) or other products derived from pigs.

How do I protect myself and my family from H3N2v influenza Virus?

A- Take Action to Prevent the Spread of Flu Viruses Between People and Pigs

- 1- Wash your hands frequently with soap and running water before and after exposure to animals.
- 2- Never eat, drink or put things in your mouth in animal areas.

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- 3- Children younger than 5 years, people 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic medical conditions (like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and weakened immune systems) are at high risk from serious complications if they get influenza. These people should consider avoiding exposure to pigs and swine barns this summer, especially if sick pigs have been identified.
- 4- If you have animals, including swine, watch them for signs of illness and call a veterinarian if you suspect they might be sick.
- 5- Avoid close contact with animals that look or act ill, when possible
- 6- Avoid contact with pigs if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms.
- 7- If you must come in contact with pigs known or suspected to be infected, or their environment, or if you must come in contact with pigs while you are sick, you should use appropriate protective measures (for example, wear protective clothing, gloves, masks that cover your mouth and nose, and other personal protective equipment) and practice good respiratory and hand hygiene.

B- Take Action to Prevent Flu Viruses Spread Between People, Including H3N2v

- 1- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. (Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.)
- 2- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand rub may be used.
- 3- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- 4- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- 5- If you are sick, stay home from work or school until your illness is over

C- If You Get Sick (if you have flu symptoms)

- 1- Contact your healthcare provider
- 2- Tell your doctor if you had direct or close contact with swine.
- 3- Tell your doctor if you have asthma, diabetes or other chronic medical conditions
- 4- Your doctor may prescribe antiviral medications for treatment, you should finish all of the medication, according to your doctor's instructions.
- 5- Stay home from school or work until your illness is over.

Do I need to get the seasonal influenza vaccine?

Yes, you should get your annual influenza vaccine. Remember that flu vaccine is the best way to protect against seasonal influenza even though the vaccine may not be effective against H3N2v influenza.