



Northwest Medical Center wants to help protect you against the Swine Flu. While we can't guarantee you won't get the flu, we are taking steps to minimize the spread of Swine Flu and we need your help.

What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen.

What are signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

CDC has determined the virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. We have implemented control precautions that include hand hygiene and wearing masks among other things.

How does swine flu spread?

Spread of this virus is thought to be happening in the same way as seasonal flu spreads; mainly through coughing or sneezing or environmental contamination through unprotected coughs, sneezes and touching with contaminated hands.

How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others?

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

How long can viruses live outside the body?

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. Frequent handwashing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

How serious is swine flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe.

Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

What can I do to try and avoid getting the flu?

1. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too. Avoid visiting in the hospital if you are sick and avoid bring sick children into the hospital.

2. Stay home when you are sick.

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

3. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Wearing a simple mask may help contain coughs and sneezes.

4. Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

What is NMC doing to help prevent the spread of swine flu?

- Working closely with the Pima County Health Department and Centers for Disease Control to investigate and monitor possible swine influenza cases.
- Promoting protective measures such as hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette by hospital staff as well as visitors and patients.
- Asking you to wear a mask if you are a patient being evaluated for flu or have symptoms of the flu.
- Sending reminders to limit unnecessary visits or to decrease the number of visitors.
- Discouraging children from visiting.
- Taking extra precautions such as wearing masks or other protective equipment when we are caring for patients.