

What is Human Swine Flu?

Human swine flu (H1N1 Influenza 09) is a totally new and different strain of flu.

Most people do not have any pre-existing immunity to human swine flu and current flu vaccinations cannot protect against it.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms are similar to normal flu and could include fever, cough, headache, muscle and joint pain, sore throat and runny nose, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhoea.

How does Human Swine Flu spread from person to person?

Human swine flu is contagious and spreading from one person to another. Being in close contact with an infected person while they are talking, coughing or sneezing puts you at risk. The virus may also spread through hand contact with an infected person or contaminated objects and surfaces.

80% of common infectious diseases are spread by hand.

Washing your hands regularly can significantly reduce your risk of catching flu.



Where can I get further help?

For further information:

- Phone 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- See your general practitioner. Please call ahead before you visit if you have symptoms.
- Go to your local hospital emergency department. Please call ahead before you visit if you have symptoms.
- Visit the Queensland Health Human Swine Flu website: www.health.qld.gov.au/swineflu



**Queensland
Government**

HUMAN SWINE FLU





Am I at risk from Human Swine Flu?

Most people with human swine flu have mild illness and are making a rapid and full recovery. Some people, however, are at greater risk of serious illness from human swine flu.

This includes:

- pregnant women
- Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders
- people who are morbidly obese
- people with chronic respiratory disease (including asthma or COPD)
- people with other chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and renal disease
- people who are immunosuppressed (e.g. those on drugs that suppress the immune system).

If you're unsure about your level of risk, speak to your doctor.



Why are these groups at greater risk?

People with existing medical conditions may have weaker body defences which makes it harder for them to fight new illness and easier for bacteria to invade cells causing conditions such as pneumonia. Flu can also make existing illnesses worse.

Indigenous Australians are more likely to have existing medical conditions that make them susceptible to serious illness from human swine flu.

Pregnant women are at increased risk of complications (including pneumonia and early labour) from any type of flu.



How can I avoid catching Human Swine Flu?

The best way to protect you, your family and community is to:

- stay home when you are sick
- wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand gel
- wash your hands prior to touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- when coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues and dispose of the tissues immediately
- don't share items such as cigarettes, glasses or cups, lipstick, toys or anything which could be contaminated with respiratory secretions
- maintain at least one metre distance from people who have flu symptoms such as coughing or sneezing.

Vulnerable individuals should be particularly diligent with these measures and consider staying away from people with flu symptoms and large group gatherings due to increased risk of contact with the infection.



What should I do if I have flu symptoms and belong to an at risk group?

If you belong to an 'at risk' group, and you have flu symptoms, you should seek immediate medical advice – either from your GP or hospital emergency department. Please call ahead before you visit. Early treatment with antivirals, such as Tamiflu can prevent severe illness and complications.



What should I do if I have flu symptoms and I m NOT in an at risk group?

Most people, who aren't at risk of complications from human swine flu and are otherwise fit and healthy, will experience mild illness.

General advice is as follows:

- stay at home and rest
- avoid people who may be at increased risk of serious illness from human swine flu
- drink plenty of fluids
- speak to your doctor or pharmacist about symptom relief – may include over-the-counter treatments to reduce pain and fever, soothe a sore throat, suppress a dry cough, loosen mucus or clear a blocked nose
- do not smoke as it is very irritating to airways that are already damaged by the virus
- ask for help - if you live alone, are a single parent, or are responsible for the care of someone who is frail or disabled, you may need to call someone to help you until you are feeling better
- talk to a doctor if you are concerned or if your symptoms are severe or worsen.

