

## Swine Flu (H1N1 Flu) Facts

**Definition:** Swine Flu is a viral infection that causes a cough, sore throat, runny nose and fever. If you don't have a fever, you don't have Swine Flu.

**Cause:** Swine Flu is caused by the H1N1 virus. After exposure (close contact), 20% of people come down with respiratory symptoms in 4 to 6 days. It's not caused by eating pork.

### **Diagnosis: How to know that your child has Swine Flu**

If Swine Flu is widespread in your community and your child has flu symptoms with a FEVER, then he or she probably has Swine Flu. **Tests:** You don't need to get any special flu tests.

**Seeing a Doctor:** You don't need to call or see your child's doctor, unless your child is HIGH-RISK (see list) or develops a complication of the flu (see "Call your child's doctor" section). Always call before coming in, because going to the office or ER needlessly can expose your child to Swine Flu.

**How to Treat Swine Flu:** The treatment of Swine Flu is no different from treating the symptoms of the common cold. Treat the cough, sore throat and fever in the usual way. Encourage adequate fluids to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics are not helpful.

### **Antiviral medicine (such as Tamiflu)**

The CDC recommends antiviral medicines be prescribed for all HIGH-RISK children (see list) who come down with Swine Flu symptoms OR live with someone who has Swine Flu.

LOW-RISK children recover fine without Tamiflu and only need it if they develop serious symptoms (such as pneumonia). Antiviral medicines must be started within 48 hours of the start of flu symptoms to have an effect. They usually reduce the time your child is sick by 1 or 2 days. They improve the symptoms but do not eliminate them.

**HIGH-RISK children for complications from Swine Flu:** children with lung disease (such as asthma), heart disease, weak immune system (such as cancer), diabetes, sickle cell disease, other chronic diseases, pregnant teens, or young children less than 2 years old.

**Expected Course:** The fever lasts 2 to 3 days, the runny or stuffy nose 1 to 2 weeks, and the cough 2 to 3 weeks. So far the rate of complications is no higher than with regular Seasonal Flu.

**Prevention of the disease:** Swine Flu shots are the best way to prevent Swine Flu. When they become available, get it according to CDC guidelines.

**Prevention of spread:** Stay home when sick. Your child may return to child care or school after the fever is gone for at least 24 hours. (CDC)

### **Call your child's doctor Now (night or day) if:**

- Your child looks or acts very sick
- Breathing becomes difficult or fast or causes retractions (sucking in between the ribs)
- Dehydration occurs (no urine in 12 hours, dry mouth, no tears)

### **Call your child's doctor during the day if:**

- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child is in the HIGH RISK group and has flu symptoms
- Earache or sinus pain occurs
- Fever lasts more than 3 days or returns after going away
- Your child becomes worse