

# SWINE FLU: ADVICE FOR EMPLOYEES

A new influenza virus, H1N1 swine influenza, has emerged with the potential to cause a pandemic. We recommend all employees take the following precautions:

- Practice good hand and respiratory hygiene at home and at work. Wash hands frequently, cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues properly.
- Stay home if you are sick, and seek medical advice.
- Make plans for childcare if schools should close. Talk with your manager if you anticipate difficulties coming to work.
- Educate your family about swine influenza.
  - Symptoms include those common to flu – fever, cough, sore throat, malaise – as well as, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting.
  - Symptoms generally appear within seven days of exposure.
  - Sick adults are likely to be infectious for seven days after the onset of symptoms. Children and immune-suppressed persons are generally infectious for longer periods – at least 10 days. Stay home during this period of time, or longer if symptoms persist.
  - Seek immediate medical care for difficulty breathing, chest pain, confusion or symptoms of dehydration.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have a plan for taking care of family members who are ill. Can they be separated from others? Can one person provide primary care to reduce exposures to others? Refer to the CDC guidance for caring for a person who is sick with swine influenza: [www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance\\_homecare.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance_homecare.htm)
- Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers and fluids with electrolytes, for example, Gatorade and juices.
- Do not give aspirin to children who may be ill with influenza. In children, aspirin can increase the likelihood of some serious complications associated with influenza. Check the ingredient labels on over-the-counter cold and flu medications to see if they contain aspirin.
- Do not give over the counter cold medications to children younger than 2 years, as the likelihood of adverse effects is greater than potential symptomatic benefit.
- Be sure that persons who are in the groups designated to receive routine pneumococcal vaccine receive that vaccine. In the U.S., these include: children aged 5 years and younger; persons over 65 years; smokers, asthmatics and persons with some specific medical conditions and immune deficiencies.
- Reduce close contact with others in the community by avoiding crowded places and temporarily refraining from greeting others with handshakes or kisses.
- If you plan to work from home during a pandemic, be sure your computer and home technology set-up are ready.
- Encourage good health practices in your family. Eat well, get a good night's sleep and exercise regularly. There is some evidence that vitamin D could help prevent influenza infections. Sources of vitamin D include exposure to sunlight and some dairy products.
- Monitor the situation in your community and follow authorities' instructions.