

A FAQ document prepared by Virginia Beach Emergency Management (VEBM) is below to help you and your family prepare and protect yourselves from H1N1. We should pray for the best but prepare for the worst.

The following additional personal checklist may be helpful:

### 1. Personal Hygiene Checklist

- \* Washing your hands frequently for 15 - 20 seconds. (Long enough to sing "Happy Birthday.)
- \* Using Hand sanitizer frequently.
- \* Avoid touching nose, mouth and eyes as much as possible..
- \* When you do sneeze or cough, cover both your mouth and nose THEN immediately wash your hands.
- \* A Surgical Mask or an extra source of protection is to have a N95 Mask for each of your family members that can be picked up at your local hardware store such as The Home Depot or Lowe's. The cost is \$1 - \$2 each. VEBM does not suggest wearing these now but encourages families to have them on hand "in the event" that things worsen.
- \* If you feel sick, stay home.

### 2. Planning Ahead for You Family

- \* Encourage family members in the above areas of Personal Hygiene. Discuss the importance of washing hands with younger children without creating an unhealthy fear.
- \* Keep a minimum of 2 weeks of food on hand in the event that people are asked to stay home. This should not be a source of panic but rather be perceived as an extra step of "wisdom" to be better prepared in the event that things become dramatically worse. The EM officials are not saying that this is going to happen but "if" it does then you are prepared. In Mexico, they are asking people to stay home and away from public gatherings such as church, school, etc. for five days as a way to control/prevent the spread of H1N1.
- \* Keep a minimum of 2 weeks of water and beverages on hand for your family.
- \* Keep a minimum of 2 weeks of necessities on hand from medicines, to toiletries and all the other essentials.

### WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu) or [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) or [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)

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### **Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about Swine Influenza**

*(Adapted from Questions and Answers Prepared by the Centers for Disease Control)*

#### **What is swine flu?**

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease that affects pigs caused by type A influenza virus. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

#### **Are there human infections with swine flu in the U.S.?**

Yes. The first cases of human infection were reported in Southern California and near San Antonio, Tex. in late spring 2009. You can view an updated case count of confirmed swine flu infections in the United States by visiting <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm>. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local and state health agencies are working together to investigate this situation.

**What is Virginia doing to protect its citizens?**

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) routinely monitors influenza activity. In light of the current situation, the VDH has alerted health care providers about the symptoms of swine flu. Together, they are investigating any reports of influenza-like activity.

**What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?**

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

**How does swine flu spread?**

Like seasonal influenza, people infected with swine flu can spread the infection from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Individuals who have close contact with pigs (e.g. working on a farm with pigs or livestock exhibits at fairs) may also be at higher risk for contracting swine flu.

**How long is an infected person contagious?**

Infected people may be contagious one day before symptoms develop and up to seven or more days after becoming sick.

**What should I do to keep from getting the flu?**

Wash your hands. This is a simple and easy way to prevent the spread of the infection. Additionally, try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, stay physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food. Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

**Are there medicines to treat swine flu?**

Yes. The CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of swine flu. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms). For more information about treatments, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/recommendations.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/recommendations.htm).

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

You should assume that an infected person is contagious as long as they exhibit symptoms.

**What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?**

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

**How long can viruses live outside the body?**

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

### **What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?**

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you are sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

### **What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?**

If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible. Do not go to work or school if ill. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

### **What is the best technique for washing your hands to avoid getting the flu?**

Wash your hands with soap and water for 15 to 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

### **What should I do if I get sick?**

Contact your health care provider. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others. If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash.

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

### **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.

**Individuals wanting more information about swine influenza should visit the Virginia Department of Health Web site at [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov) or the Centers for Disease Control Web site at [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu). See additional information on Regent's homepage at [www.regent.edu](http://www.regent.edu).**