

SWINE FLU FACT FILE

What are the symptoms?

Swine flu symptoms are similar to the symptoms of regular flu and include fever of over 100.4°F, fatigue, lack of appetite, and cold. Some people with swine flu have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Nearly everyone with flu has at least two of these symptoms.

So, how do you know if you have flu or just cold?

There is one clue: when you have the flu, you feel flu symptoms sooner than you would cold symptoms, and they come on with much greater intensity. With the flu, you may feel very weak and fatigued for up to 2 or 3 weeks. You'll have muscle aches and periods of chills and sweats as fever comes and goes. You may also have a stuffy or runny nose, headache, and sore throat.

Can I compare flu symptoms with cold symptoms?

Yes. The following chart can help you compare flu symptoms with cold symptoms. Use it to learn the differences and similarities between flu and cold symptoms. Then, if you get flu symptoms, call your doctor and ask about an antiviral drug.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, high 100-102 degrees F); lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General aches, pains	Slight	Usual; often severe
Fatigue, Weakness	Quite mild	Can last up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Early and prominent
Stuffy Nose	Common	Sometimes
Chest Discomfort,Cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common; can become severe

You cannot confirm if you have swine flu just based on your symptoms. Like seasonal flu, pandemic swine flu can cause neurologic symptoms in children. These events are rare, but, as cases associated with seasonal flu have shown, they can be very severe and often fatal.

Doctors may offer a rapid flu test, but what you need to understand is a negative result doesn't necessarily mean you don't have the flu. Only lab tests can definitively show whether you've got swine flu. State health departments can do these tests.

Source: WebMD

What should you do immediately?

Those of you who have travelled from the affected countries in the past ten days and show symptoms swine flu like fever, cough, sore throat and difficulty in breathing should immediately contact the telephone number given below or visit the nearby Government Hospital.

Important contact numbers:

Outbreak Monitoring Cell (Control Room, NICD): 011-23921401

Websites: www.mohfw.nic.in and www.nicd.nic.in

You can also contact a toll free number 2392 1401 at the National Institute of Communicable Disease

Contact number for each cities:

Bangalore

BIAL Swine Flu Center - 91-80-22001490

SDS TUBERCULOSIS & RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE OF CHEST DISEASES(Govt. of Karnataka), Hosur Road, Bangalore - 560029

Helpline No: 91-80-26631923

Chennai

Communicable Disease Hospital, 87, T.H. Road, Tondiarpet, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Hyderabad

Govt. General and Chest Diseases Hospital, Erragadda , Hyderabad

Hospital Helpline Number - 040-23814939

Kolkata

Beliaghata Infectious Diseases Hospital, 57, Beliaghata Main Road, Kolkata

Mumbai

Kasturba Hospital, Arthur Road, Sane Guruji Marg, Mumbai 400011

Ph: 022- 23083901 / 23092458 / 23000889

New Delhi

Yellow Fever Quarantine Centre, Near AAI Residential Colony, New Delhi

Ph: 91-11-25652129

Influenza Ward, Ward no 5, Second Floor, New Building, RML Hospital, Delhi-1

RML- 91-11-24525211,23404328,23365525- Ext 4328

Source: Swine Flu India website

Who is at risk?

Those who are more at risk from becoming seriously ill with swine flu are people with:

chronic (long-term) lung disease, including people who have had drug treatment for their asthma within the past three years,

chronic heart disease,

chronic kidney disease,

chronic liver disease,

chronic neurological disease

suppressed immune systems (whether caused by disease or treatment),

diabetes,

pregnant women,

people aged 65 or older, and

young children under five.

Source: National Health Service, UK website

How does it spread?

The new swine flu virus is highly contagious, that is it spreads from person to person. The virus is spread through the droplets that come out of the nose or mouth when someone coughs or sneezes. If someone coughs or sneezes and they do not cover it, those droplets can spread about one metre (3ft). If you are very nearby you might breathe them in.

Or, if someone coughs or sneezes into their hand, those droplets and the virus within them are easily transferred to surfaces that the person touches, such as door handles, hand rails, telephones and keyboards. If you touch these surfaces and touch your face, the virus can enter your system, and you can become infected.

Source: National Health Service, UK website

Can it be prevented?

Influenza antiviral drugs also can be used to prevent influenza when they are given to a person who is not ill, but who has been or may be near a person with swine influenza. When used to prevent the flu, antiviral drugs are about 70% to 90% effective. When used for prevention, the number of days that they should be used will vary depending on a person's particular situation.

Follow this general procedure to reduce the risk of catching or spreading the virus, you should:

Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using a tissue

Throw the tissue away quickly and carefully

Wash your hands regularly with soap and water

Clean hard surfaces (like door handles and remote controls) frequently with a normal cleaning product

Keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick. Do not go to work or school while ill

Stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone, except to seek medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)

Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated

Wear a facemask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others.

Source: CDC, National Health Service, UK website

Will it help to wear a mask?

Information on the effectiveness of facemasks and respirators for decreasing the risk of influenza infection in community settings is extremely limited. So, it is difficult to assess their potential effectiveness in decreasing the risk of Swine Flu virus transmission in these settings. However, a well-fitted, FDA-approved mask together with other preventive measures MAY reduce the risk of contracting the flu. Those who are sick or caring for someone who is ill should consider using a mask or respirator if leaving the house becomes necessary.

Source: CDC

What precautions should one take at home?

Two things - soap and water can reduce the chance of infection by 30 per cent. All you need to do is keep washing your hand with soap and water frequently. Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand cleaner when soap and water are not available. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

Eat healthy: Proteins are essential to help your body maintain and build strength. Lean meat, poultry, fish, legumes, dairy, eggs, and nuts and seeds are good sources of protein.

The Food and Drug Administration recommends that adults eat 50 grams of protein per day. Pregnant and nursing women need more. By eating foods high in protein, we also get the benefit of other healing

nutrients such as vitamins B6 and B12, both of which contribute to a healthy immune system.

Vitamin B6 is widely available in foods, including protein foods such as turkey and beans as well as potatoes, spinach, and enriched cereal grains. Proteins such as meats, milk, and fish also contain vitamin B12, a powerful immune booster.

Minerals such as selenium and zinc work to keep the immune system strong. These minerals are found in protein rich foods such as beans, nuts, meat, and poultry.

Exercise: Regular exercise may help prevent the flu. According to recent findings, when moderate exercise is repeated on a near daily basis, there is a cumulative immune-enhancing effect. That is, your strong immune system can fight flu better. When you exercise, your white blood cells -- the blood cells that fight infections in the body -- travel through your body more quickly, fighting bacteria and viruses (such as flu) more efficiently. To maintain good health, experts recommend at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity such as walking, swimming, biking, or running each day.

Source: Flu India website, CDC, WebMD

What precautions should one take at schools?

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

People who are sick with an influenza-like illness should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel, for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing

Wash your hands often

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

Source: CDC

Is it safe to travel?

Avoid traveling unnecessarily. However, if you must travel, check how the country you're going to handles swine flu. Although, the WHO doesn't recommend travel restrictions, many countries have set up their own H1N1 policies, and some travelers have been screened or quarantined in other countries because of swine flu concerns.

Source: WebMD.com