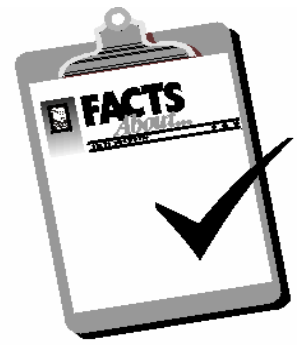




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

H1N1 (SWINE) FLU

What is it?

H1N1 (Swine) Flu is a variant of normal seasonal influenza that contains bits of viruses from birds, pigs, and humans. It usually affects pigs but may also make people sick. Human H1N1 (Swine) Flu is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of the regular human seasonal flu.

How is it spread?

Persons can be infected with the H1N1 (Swine) Flu virus by coming into contact with infected pigs or being close to infected pigs. Person to person spread of H1N1 viruses is believed to be spread by coughing and sneezing. Coughs and sneezes release the germs into the air where they can be breathed in by others. Germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs, where they can be picked up on hands when someone touches their mouth and/or nose. H1N1 (Swine) Flu has not been shown to be transmissible to people through eating properly handled and prepared pork.

What do I look for?

It is expected that persons infected with the H1N1 (Swine) Flu virus will have symptoms of illness similar to human influenza. Symptoms can include fever, coughing, muscle aches, weakness, and lack of appetite. Persons may also experience headache, shortness of breath, runny nose and sore throat. Children are more likely to have stomach symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

How is it treated?

There are medications called antiviral drugs that can be started within two days of symptoms for early treatment of infection with swine influenza viruses in humans. Mild illness that appears to be going away on its own does not require medication. Antibiotics have no effect against a viral illness.

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For more information

DURHAM REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT

905-668-7711 1-800-841-2729 or www.durham.ca



How can I protect myself?

While healthy eating, adequate sleep and physical activity may help to maintain general good health, proper personal hygiene practices are the most effective ways to protect yourself and others from the H1N1 (Swine) Flu.

Practice

- Washing hands frequently and properly using soap and water after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, after shaking hands, before and after eating, before putting in contact lenses (eyes) or before touching your face. An alcohol based hand sanitizer can be used when hands are not visibly soiled.
- Covering your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing by using a tissue, or raise your arm to your face to cough or sneeze into your sleeve and wash your hands afterwards. If a tissue is used, throw out the tissue right away.
- Keeping your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth
- Keeping frequently touched surfaces clean, i.e. keyboards, doorknobs, countertops.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as eating utensils, water bottles, drinks, hand towels, toothbrushes, cigarettes, lip products, mouthpieces of musical instruments, etc.
- Staying at home if you get sick with a respiratory-like illness, and avoid public areas. You can return to school or work after one full day of feeling well again.

May 4, 2009