

Swine Flu/Seasonal Flu Primer

What I need to know to care for myself and family

The general seasonal flu and the swine flu are both influenza viruses that spread easily from person to person. Influenza typically comes on suddenly and can cause mild to severe illness. Both types of flu spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. People may also be infected by touching the surface of something, such as doorknobs, shared keyboards with the flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose. The signs and symptoms of the swine flu include: fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some individuals experience nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

How is the flu different from a cold?

A cold typically comes on gradually and there is rarely a fever. Chills are uncommon with colds and the cough is usually productive, i.e. mucous producing. Sneezing is common with a cold and uncommon with the flu. The level of fatigue with a cold is less than with the flu. A headache typically does not accompany a cold.



All's Well
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by Moira Fitzpatrick, PhD, ND

to underlying conditions, primarily heart, lung and diabetes, a compromised immune system and a higher base level of inflammation that impedes the body's ability to fight diseases.

I recommend the following nutritional supplements: high dose Vitamin A, except with pregnant women, vitamin C, mixed carotenoids, bioflavonoids, zinc, and selenium. Additionally, I recommend a cough elixir with marshmallow root, yerba santa, lemon grass, wild black cherry bark, cinnamon bark, bitter and sweet orange.

Generally, I recommend that individuals take immune supportive supplements throughout the winter, during times of stress and when exposed to individuals who may be contagious. Some immune enhancing herbs are Echinacea, Astragalus, Golden seal, Green tea polyphenols, various types of mushrooms, and products containing Allicin from garlic. Talk to your health care professional about immune support during the winter months.

When should I see my healthcare provider?

I would recommend that you see your healthcare provider when symptoms first appear. It is my opinion that early treatment decreases the duration of the illness, improves how you feel, and decreases the spread of disease.

Should I get a flu vaccine? The swine flu vaccine?

There are two separate vaccinations, the swine flu and the seasonal flu. The CDC recommends that people at high risk of exposure or those who could develop serious complications from the flu receive vaccinations. CDC recommendations for seasonal flu include: pregnant women, young children, people with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart and lung conditions, people 65 years and older, people who live in nursing homes, and people who either live with or care for those at high risk.

Current CDC recommendations for swine flu vaccination include: pregnant women, persons who live with or care for infants less than six months, health care providers, emergency medical services personnel, persons aged six months–24 years, and persons aged 25–64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk, such as chronic lung conditions, diabetes, heart (except hypertension), kidney, liver, blood, nervous system and muscle chronic conditions. A person with a weakened immune system, such as HIV is at increased risk.

Healthy individuals over 65 are the least likely to contract swine flu because of resistance that may be due to previous exposure. Most recently, there is some data suggesting that obese individuals are at a greater risk for flu. This may be due

Another Point of View

The major concern about the swine flu vaccine was that it was rushed to market.

The vaccine contains Thimersal, which is a mercury containing organic compound. The concern is that it has been implicated in Autism in children with mitochondrial dysfunction. Additionally, it has had negative effects on individuals with chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia and individuals with blood brain barrier dysfunction. Thimersal is a neurotoxin and contains 100 times the level of mercury considered safe in a food.



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Who should not receive vaccinations?

I would recommend that if you have an allergy to eggs or any other substance in the vaccine, talk to your health care provider. An allergy is different from a food sensitivity. If you have had Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a severe paralytic syndrome, then the vaccine should be avoided. Since the vaccine works by delivering a dose of killed or weakened virus, which provokes the immune system to produce antibodies, then if you are moderately or severely ill, talk to your health care provider as to whether it is appropriate to have the vaccine.

What are some daily actions that you can take to prevent getting the flu? Whenever you cough or sneeze cover your nose and mouth, either with a tissue or your sleeve. Remember to wash your hands often and if soap and water is not available, use alcohol based disposable wipes. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Avoid contact with sick people. Don't forget the basics, eat a well balanced diet, get plenty of sleep and engage in stress reduction activities.

Treatment

If you get the flu, stay home, get bedrest and increase fluids. I recommend antiviral, analgesic and anti-inflammatory herbs in a tincture form. Some herbs include a combination of Lomatium, Echinacea, Goldenseal, Thuja, Osha root, wild bergamot with some licorice for its soothing and harmonious ef-

What are emergency warning signs that I need to go to urgent care or an ER?

If a child or adult has difficulty breathing, breathing faster than usual or has pain with breathing; when flu-like symptoms improve and then return with fever and a worse cough; if a child is not interacting, has persistent vomiting, is not drinking enough water. Other emergency warning signs for adults include: pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, lightheadedness at rest or when standing up, or confusion.

In conclusion, reports coming from the Southern hemisphere (end of winter there) suggest that the swine flu is highly infectious and not particularly lethal. Among deaths in the United States, they have primarily resulted from individuals suffering from congenital or underlying illnesses. So it seems that the flu contributes to making the body more susceptible to secondary infections like pneumonia or bronchitis. Take good care and enjoy the holidays.

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