

# COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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## SWINE FLU

### Swine Flu: What Suffolk County Residents Need to Know

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As you already know, the United States Department of Health and Human Services has declared a **Public Health Emergency** in light of the confirmed cases of swine influenza in this country. The federal government has declared this emergency in order to ensure the flow of funding and anti-viral medications to state governments. ***This should not cause anxiety or panic.*** Take charge of your family's health by reading these facts about swine flu and following a few simple steps; ***your health is in your hands.***

#### 1. What is swine flu?

Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs, similar to the type of flu we are all familiar with. Sometimes people catch swine flu from pigs and then these people can spread it to other people. This is what has happened over the last few weeks. Swine flu is not the same as bird flu, avian flu or pandemic flu and you cannot get swine flu from eating pork products.

#### 2. What is the current swine flu situation in the United States and here in Suffolk County?

Approximately 100 human swine flu infections have been confirmed in ten states including Arizona, California, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New York, Ohio and Texas. There has been only one death reported, a Mexican toddler who died on April 29 in Texas. State and local health departments are actively monitoring the outbreak around the clock and will continue to test all suspected cases. Doctors and hospitals have received special instructions from both state and local health authorities. This intensive surveillance will continue until the outbreak is contained and the threat is eliminated. Most cases of swine flu confirmed in this country have been mild and the infected individuals are recovering.

Here in the County of Suffolk, there are two probable cases, none confirmed. The investigation is continuing.



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### 3. What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu?

They are the same as the regular flu we are all familiar with: **fever, cough, sore throat, headache, body aches, chills, and fatigue**. Some people also have vomiting or diarrhea. These symptoms can be either mild or severe depending on the individual person. People with swine flu are contagious to others for seven days following symptom onset.

### 4. What should I do if I think I may have swine flu?

If you begin to have flu symptoms, ***do not be anxious or alarmed but do take appropriate action***. You should stay home from work or school and contact your health care provider. Doctors have been given special instructions regarding swine flu and will be able to recommend the appropriate testing and/or medications you may require. There is currently no vaccine available for swine flu but there are several available therapies which may be appropriate for certain individuals.

### 5. How can I protect myself and my family from swine flu?

There are several simple steps you can take to protect your family's health. At this point in time, there is no need to keep otherwise healthy children home from school or other social activities. There is no need to wear a face mask unless you have been instructed to do so. Should this situation change, local school and health officials will keep the public informed about what they should do. At this point in time, everyone should:

- ✚ Practice good health habits such as adequate sleep, eating nutritious food and keeping physically active with plenty of fresh air.
- ✚ Keep frequently touched hard surfaces such as doorknobs, refrigerator door handles, telephones, and bathroom sink surfaces clean by washing with a cleaner which says "registered disinfectant" on the label. If this is not available, you can clean surfaces with a solution made of 1 tablespoon of bleach added to each quart of water. You can also use alcohol based sanitizer wipes to clean items which are used often such as remote controls and computer mice.
- ✚ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth as much as possible.
- ✚ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- ✚ Wash your hands with soap and water as often as you can, especially after coughing or sneezing and before eating.
- ✚ Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer to wash your hands when soap and water are not available.

- ✚ Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- ✚ If you get sick with the type of symptoms described above, stay home from work or school and contact your health care provider for further instructions.

#### 6. What should I do if I feel very anxious and overwhelmed by the threat of swine flu?

It is natural to feel stress in this type of situation. Recognize that your feelings are normal but remember that **knowledge is power** and you can take specific action to protect your own health and the health of your family. Parents may want to consider limiting children's exposure to television coverage of this problem if they notice that the children are preoccupied with swine flu. If you watch the news together, talk to your children about swine flu and remind them of what you are doing to protect your family's health. Follow the recommendations listed above, take charge of the situation and remember that you have substantial influence and power over your own health and the health of your family.

For more information about swine flu go to:

[http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general\\_info.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general_info.htm) or

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>

You may also call the New York State Hotline at 1-800-808-1987 24 hours a day 7 days a week if you should have further questions or concerns.