

SWINE FLU: Fact-sheet

Swine Flu: Over the last few days we have been seeing news coverage of cases of Swine flu in Mexico and in the United States.

Since Saturday there have been many cases of Swine flu in Mexico. 81 deaths were “likely linked” to the Swine Flu. Most recently there are nine confirmed cases in Texas and California, 2 cases in Kansas and 8 cases in a private school in New York.

The US administration is concerned about the impact this flu may have on the people of the United States and so have released 25% of its Tamiflu antiviral medication Stockpile.

Though there are no cases in Pennsylvania or at Seton Hill we wanted to give you some information about Swine Flu. With this in mind the Wellness Center has developed a Swine Flu Fact Sheet to address some questions you may have.

What is it?

Swine flu is a virus that normally infects pigs. Normally it can be transferred from pigs to humans who have direct contact with pigs; occasionally the human host can infect other humans. This flu is a combination of four known strains including avian flu, human flu and two other strains.

How is it spread?

Human to human transmission is through coughing and sneezing of the infected person. During a cough or a sneeze droplets are dispersed 3-6 feet anyone close to the infected person can inhale the droplets and become infected. Also with poor cough and sneeze hygiene the droplets can land on surfaces. People can become infected by touching these surfaces and then touching their nose or mouth.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of Swine flu are similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include: fever (over 101 and of sudden onset), muscle aches, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Other symptoms reported have been runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

What medications are available for treatment?

Two medications have proven to be helpful in decreasing the severity of the illness. Tamiflu and Relenza which are antivirals used to treat seasonal influenza. These medications should be started within 48 hours of symptom onset and should be taken for 5 to 7 days.

What can be done to prevent the spread of Swine flu?

- First and foremost **WASH YOUR HANDS**, frequently and well. This prevents the transfer of the virus from services to your nose and mouth. Carry hand sanitizers with you if water is not available.
- Contain your cough and sneeze. Cough or sneeze into your elbow, this will prevent the virus from getting on your hands and then being transferred to other people’s hands or to surfaces. If you use a tissue, throw it away in a trash receptacle and wash hands *immediately*.
- If you are sick, stay at home. If you have flu-like symptoms go to your doctor’s office first, do not head to the emergency room unless symptoms become more severe.
- Maintain a 6 foot distance from an infected person and limit contact with them to avoid becoming infected. Avoid crowds.
- Do not eat or drink after anyone.

Remember the symptoms for Swine flu are the same for human seasonal influenza. These simple self-care instructions can help prevent you from contracting the flu or lessen the severity if you do contract Swine flu.