

Swine influenza virus (referred to as SIV) refers to influenza cases that are caused by Orthomyxoviruses endemic to pig populations. Swine flu infects people every year and is found typically in people who have been in contact with pigs, although there have been cases of person-to-person transmission.

There is no research that can predict who is at risk and who is not. What the history of previous Influenza pandemics has indicated is that patients who had the greatest mortality were those whose immune system over-reacted after the initial Influenza virus infection.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

**The following are the signs and symptoms most commonly associated with Swine Influenza Virus:**

- Symptoms are similar to those of regular human flu and include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, disorientation, chills and fatigue
- Some patients have also reported stiffness of the joints, diarrhea and vomiting

**In children emergency warning signs requiring urgent medical attention include:**

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Lack of thirst resulting in not drinking enough fluids
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and a worse cough

- Fever with a rash

**In adults, emergency warning signs requiring urgent medical attention include:**

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Sudden dizziness or confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

### **How does swine flu spread?**

- Spread of swine influenza A (H1N1) happens mainly from person-to-person in the same way that seasonal flu spreads i.e. through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.
- Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick.

### **Naturopathic Preventative Strategies**

The following strategies are beneficial in the prevention of diseases such as Swine Influenza virus

#### **Hygiene**

- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash after using it.
- Cough or sneeze into sleeve or jacket of bent arm rather than into closed fist or open hand.
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after a cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.

## *Patient Handout on Swine Influenza A (H1N1) (Swine Flu)*

### **Avoid close contact with sick people**

- Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by infected people.
- If sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

### **Lifestyle**

- Ensure adequate rest
- Wash hands with soap frequently during the day
- Do deep breathing exercises
- Walk and do stretching exercises to boost the immune system (Note: Extreme aerobic exercises and weight training are best minimized if you have any of the above symptoms.)
- Dry skin brushing and contrast showers are useful to support optimal lymphatic system function.
- Remember that 'emotional' stress, fear and worry can depress the immune system.
- Allow a mild to moderate fever. A fever of 1-3 degrees above normal core body temperature (37.5 degrees Celsius) has a profound effect on immune modulation and optimizes the healing response.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a new/worse cough, shortness of breath, are feeling feverish, and/or have had shakes or chills in the last 24 hours, and have travelled within the last seven days to an infected area, or have been in contact with a sick person, contact a naturopathic doctor or other health care professional immediately.

Naturopathic medicine offers a number of options to treat and manage the swine flu influenza virus.

For more information, or to find a naturopathic doctor near you, visit our website at:

[www.cand.ca](http://www.cand.ca)