

What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

Q: What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

A: There are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy.

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- [Wash your hands often with soap and water](#), especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, it is recommended that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Q: What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

A: Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

- First and most important: [Wash your hands](#).
Try to stay in good general health.
Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, and manage your stress.
Drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.
Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus.
Avoid close contact with people who are sick. (Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, it is recommended that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Q: What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

- **A:** If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible.
[Do not go to work or school if ill.](#)
[Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.](#) It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Put your used tissue in the waste basket.
[Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue.](#) Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.
Alternatively, [cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.](#)

Q: What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

- **A:** Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. **Wash with soap and water.** Or clean with **alcohol-based hand cleaner.** We recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. Sing the ABC with kids.
- When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

Q: What should I do if I get sick?

A: If you live in [areas that have reported cases](#) and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact their health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Q: Can people catch swine flu from eating pork?

- **A:** **No. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food.** You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses