

***A new influenza virus that spreads between people has recently been identified. This influenza is called swine influenza, because it is derived from an influenza virus that normally infects pigs. The situation is rapidly evolving.***

## Swine flu

# Key Points for Children's Services

**Issued:** 1 May 2009

### What is swine influenza (swine flu)?

Swine influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans, however, human infections with swine flu have occurred in the past, and cases of human-to-human spread of a swine flu virus have been recently confirmed.

### Current status

Human cases of a new form of influenza virus have been identified in the United States, Mexico, Canada and a number of other countries.

The World Health Organization has declared the swine influenza situation to be a public health emergency of international concern and has raised its pandemic alert level to Level 5.

This event is of concern because:

- Swine influenza is derived from an animal influenza virus, which means that humans are likely to have little or no immunity to the virus
- There has been rapid spread to multiple communities overseas
- Swine influenza is affecting unusual age groups (healthy, young adults).

The swine influenza virus is thought to be sensitive to the latest antiviral drugs oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza).

NSW Health is working very closely with other State and Commonwealth Government agencies to investigate and respond to this situation.

### Who is at risk

Anyone returning from an affected country may be at risk. To access the latest affected country list, please see the NSW Health website ([http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/swine\\_flu.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/swine_flu.asp))

People who have been in close contact with those who are known to have the disease may also be at increased risk.

### What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of swine influenza are similar to seasonal influenza (fever, cough, tiredness, muscle aches, sore throat, chills, shortness of breath, runny nose, headache). Symptoms of influenza generally appear between two to four days after exposure.

### Controlling the Spread of Infection

If any child develops influenza like symptoms whilst in or within 7 days of returning from an affected country please contact their parents immediately. Advise the child's parents to attend their nearest hospital emergency department. There they should tell hospital staff that they have recently returned from overseas and may have flu. Further public health advice can be obtained from local Public Health Units (see below for contact details).

The centre manager should contact their local Public Health Unit immediately to notify the case.

Staff and children need to be encouraged to take appropriate precautions: cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and wash hands regularly, including after contact with soiled tissues, after blowing their nose or coughing, before eating, and after going to the toilet or changing a nappy. If staff or children are sick with an influenza like illness, they should be advised to stay at home and limit contact with other people to avoid infecting them.

### Reassuring Children

Young children often need reassurance when there is concern about an issue in the community. They may misunderstand what is happening and become anxious. It is important for staff and parents to listen closely to what children are asking or saying, and think about whether they are looking for factual information, or if the questions are expressing anxiety about swine influenza. They need to know that adults understand how they feel and are able to keep them safe.

Adults need to be conscious of the presence of children when discussing the illness. It is a good idea not to let children overhear adult conversations about worrying things when they are too young to be able to join in.

### For More information:

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing swine influenza information hotline **1802007**

NSW Health swine flu information:

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/swine\\_flu.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/swine_flu.asp)

NSW Health Swine influenza factsheet:

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/swine\\_flu.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/swine_flu.html)

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing:

<http://www.health.gov.au/>

Staying Healthy in Child Care

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ch43syn.htm>

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/>

Travel Advice (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade):

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>

### Further information – Public Health Units in NSW

For more information please contact your doctor, local public health unit or community health centre – look under *NSW Government* at the front of the White Pages.

Metropolitan Areas			Rural Areas		
Northern Sydney / Central Coast	Hornsby	02 9477 9400	Greater Southern	Goulburn	02 4824 1837
	Gosford	02 4349 4845		Albury	02 6080 8900
South Eastern Sydney / Illawarra	Randwick	02 9382 8333	Greater Western	Broken Hill	08 8080 1499
	Wollongong	02 4221 6700		Dubbo	02 6841 5569
Sydney South West	Camperdown	02 9515 9420	Hunter / New England	Bathurst	02 6339 5601
	Liverpool	02 9515 9420		Newcastle	02 4924 6477
Sydney West	Penrith	02 4734 2022	North Coast	Tamworth	02 6767 8630
	Parramatta	02 9840 3603		Port Macquarie	02 6588 2750
Justice Health Service	Matraville	02 9311 2707		Lismore	02 6620 7500
NSW Department of Health	Nth Sydney	02 9391 9000			
NSW Health website	www.health.nsw.gov.au				