

Information for patients with swine flu (H1N1)

This leaflet contains important information to help keep you and your family safe.

**For more information on
swine flu contact:**
NHS Direct 0845 4647
0800 1 513 513
www.nhs.uk
www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu

You have been assessed as having swine flu but you do not need hospital admission.

What is swine flu?

Swine flu is caused by an influenza virus that can now be transmitted amongst humans. Flu viruses are spread through the droplets that come out of your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze.

Swine flu is very infectious and this has led to the current pandemic. At present it is no more serious than normal seasonal influenza.

What happens now?

Doctors are now diagnosing swine flu according to symptoms rather than waiting for test results. Tracing contacts of people with swine flu and giving them preventative treatments is no longer recommended other than in cases when the contact has been with someone with a chronic disease.

Will I need treatment?

Most reported cases in the UK have been mild and people have recovered fully after treatment. Many people will recover from swine flu without the need of antiviral drugs and some may choose not to seek treatment. If your doctor tells you that you require antiviral treatment you will have been advised how to get this.

How should I look after myself?

- Stay at home.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take paracetamol-based cold remedies as necessary and ensure you keep an adequate supply in the house.
- Tell your family, friends and neighbours that you are unwell and discourage unnecessary visitors.
- Identify 'flu friends' - friends and relatives who can help, for example, by collecting medicines and food for you.

What if I get worse?

Only a very small minority of people with swine flu become seriously ill. If your symptoms get worse despite following the advice above, contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit www.nhs.uk for advice. If you are still concerned, stay at home and call your GP. If you become seriously unwell, have trouble breathing or become abnormally drowsy, an ambulance should be called.

How to reduce spread of germs

- Avoid close contact with other people.
- Clean surfaces regularly to get rid of germs.
- Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Place used tissues in a bin as soon as possible.
- Ensure everyone washes their hands regularly with soap and water.

In particular, avoid contact with people who may be at a greater risk if they develop swine flu, including those under 5 and over 65 years old, people with a long-term illness or women who are pregnant.

When are people most infectious?

People are most infectious to others soon after they develop symptoms, although they continue to spread the virus (for example, in coughs and sneezes) for up to five days (seven days in children). People become less infectious as their symptoms subside and once their symptoms are gone they are no longer considered infectious to others. You can return to work 7 days after you became ill (4 days if you have had antiviral treatment) if your symptoms have resolved.

Further information on swine flu

- Find out how to protect yourself and others by calling **NHS Direct on 0845 4647** or visit www.nhs.uk.
- Call **0800 1 513 513** to hear the latest information on swine flu.
- Visit www.direct.gov.uk for essential information concerning travel, schools and colleges, and the workplace.

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