



Athletes & Swine Flu

(Swine Influenza A - H1N1)

What is Swine Flu?

H1N1 Influenza is a sub-type A influenza virus that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people. If you are an athlete, and potentially exposed to groups of people (in the locker room, on the field, etc.) you should be taking precautions to prevent the spread of Swine Flu and other infections.

Signs and Symptoms

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How does swine flu spread?

Spread of this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person 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. The Centers for Disease Control has determined that this H1N1 influenza A virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

Please seek assistance from your Athletic Trainer, School Nurse, and/or a Physician if you experience any of the following:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

Precautionary measures to prevent the spread of swine flu include:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective. Athletes should sing their ABCs twice in a row while washing their hands to ensure the proper length of time. Wash hands before & after practice & games.
2. Avoid people who are ill.
3. Stay home if you are sick.
4. Use tissue when you cough, sneeze or spit, and dispose of the tissue in a covered trash bin
5. Keep hands away from your face. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Clean shared space more often such as phone receivers, keyboards, steering wheels and office equipment.
7. Refrain from sharing personal items such as forks, spoons, toothbrushes and towels.
8. Clean game & sport equipment after use. EXAMPLE: Disinfecting game balls with Lysol after practice and games.
9. Make sure water bottles & other shared equipment are thoroughly cleaned after each use.
10. Don't allow an infected athlete to be around the team. EXAMPLE: Even though an athlete may not be playing don't allow them to travel with or attend a game/practice to watch.
11. Infected athletes must be free of fever for 24 hrs. before being allowed to return to school and athletics.

Practice the three C's:

****Clean – properly wash your hands frequently***

****Cover – cover your cough and sneeze***

****Contain – contain your germs by staying home if you are sick***

Is there a vaccine for the Swine Flu?

A vaccine for the new H1N1 flu will also be available.

The best time to get a shot is between mid-October and mid-November. The seasonal flu shot WILL NOT protect you against the (new) H1N1 flu.

There will be enough of the H1N1 flu shots for all priority groups and anyone else who wants one.

RESOURCES (information for this sheet taken from the Arkansas Department of Health & the University of Central Arkansas athletic department):

www.healtharkansas.com

www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm

www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_internal_003

www.cdc.gov/swineflu/

For more information about the Arkansas Athletic Trainers Association, please go to:
www.swata.org/aata



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