

SWINE FLU SPECIAL

Issue 45

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“A fit, healthy body—
that is the best fashion
statement”

- Jess C. Scott

Swine Influenza is a respiratory disease originated in pigs caused by H1N1 virus.

Adult Symptoms

Coughs , Sore throat , Vomiting , Chills , Fever , Headache and Body ache , Fatigue , Nausea , Diarrhea

Symptoms in Children

Severe or persistent vomiting , Fast breathing or trouble breathing , Not drinking enough fluids , Flu like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough , Inactiveness , Getting irritable

How does it spread?

The new swine flu virus is highly contagious; it spreads from person to person. The virus is spread through the droplets that come out of the nose or mouth when someone coughs or sneezes. If someone coughs or sneezes without covering it, those droplets can spread about one metre (3ft). Even, if someone coughs or sneezes into their hand, those droplets and the virus within them are easily transferred to surfaces that the person touches, such as door handles, hand rails, telephones and keyboards. If you touch these surfaces and touch your face, the virus can enter your system, and you can become infected.

Treatment

It is difficult to differentiate between seasonal flu and influenza A (H1N1) without medical assistance. The symptoms between seasonal flu and swine influenza are very similar which include fever, cough, runny nose, body and head ache.

Only with medical help you can confirm a case of influenza A. Experts also mention that panicking and rushing to get a swine flu test at

government hospitals can actually boomerang into you getting infected by others who have come for the same. A basic influenza test at a private or government laboratory would help in a primary identification, whether a flu virus exists. On getting a positive test you can go to government hospital for detecting a further case of swine flu. The swine flu in human can be treated with the help with antiviral drugs. If such antiviral drugs are taken during initial stages of the disorder, it can help to prevent further complication. Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and Zanamivir (Relenza) are antiviral drugs which are recommended by experts for treating swine flu. These tablets are currently available only on detection at a Government Hospital.

Precautionary Measures:

- Always cover your mouth & nose while coughing and sneezing with handkerchief or tissue.
- Wash your hands frequently, use alcohol based hand wash.
- Avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth.
- Ensure places like kitchen, toilets, etc are clean.
- Drink loads of water and get enough sleep;
- Avoid alcohol, because alcohol is an immune suppressant
- Avoid close contact with any bird or animals. Avoid going to zoos.

If you are affected:

- Confine yourself to a room. Wearing a mask is a must.
- Swine flu is most contagious in the initial 5 days. For children, it can be contagious up to 10 days.

Who should take the Swine flu vaccine?

According to Dr. Agam Vor, Chest physician consulting in Cooper Hospital, “All those who frequently travel, have kidney ailments, are smokers, have diabetes or family member of a swine flu patient must take this vaccine.” He adds that everyone needs to be vaccinated from swine flu since it is an air borne disease and everybody is at risk.

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention says that pregnant women, those who care for children younger than 5 years and all those between age of 6 months and 24 years and those who are older than 24 years and suffering from ailments like diabetes should get themselves vaccinated.

Who shouldn't take the swine flu vaccine?

It is stated in the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention website that those who have a life threatening allergy against eggs should not get themselves vaccinated. It is recommended that anyone with strong allergy should consult the doctor before taking the vaccination.

Further for the intranasal vaccine, it is not recommended to be taken by women who are pregnant. All those who have weakened immune system like suffering from heart, kidney, liver, lung ailment or disease or

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LATHARGY, FEVER, LACK OF APPETITE, RUNNING NOSE,
PAIN, VOMITING, NAUSEA, COUGHING, DIARRHOEA



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SWINE FLU CONTINUED 2

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wheezing should not take the vaccine. Also those who are in close contact with someone with severely weakened immune system should not get them vaccinated with intranasal vaccine.

About the Immunity provided by these vaccines

Though vaccine provide immunity against the particular virus for life, most vaccines are effective for about a year or two.

This is because viruses tend to change their structure frequently and it takes about a year before a new strain of virus emerges. Thus you need to get yourself immunized every year to avoid swine flu.

Types of Vaccinations:

Intramuscular Vaccine

· **Single syringe shot** - It is the most preferred vaccine which is administered through a shot in the arm. It can be administered to wide range of people from healthy to those with chronic ailments. Unlike the intranasal vaccine, it contains dead virus.

· **Multi shot vials**- These contain the preservative thimerosal a preservative that prevents the contamination of the vial. Though extensive study does not show any adverse side effect; since thimerosal contains mercury, many want to give it a miss.

Intra nasal Sprays- These are directly administered in the nasal cavity; it is a non invasive vaccine

which uses live but weakened virus to create immunity. It can be administered to anyone from the age of 2 to 49 who does not have any underlying ailment.

Indian Made Vaccines:

Vaxiflu S is an egg based swine flu, single dose vaccine, produced by pharmaceutical major Cadila Healthcare and is priced at Rs. 350. It is the first vaccine produced in India since independence. It is a prescription vaccine which cannot be bought over the counter at the chemists. It can only be taken by those over the age of 18.

Side effects –General side effects include fever, chills and mild soreness. A rare risk for a neurological disorder named Guillain Barre Syndrome (1 in 100,000).

Nasovac is the second vaccine produced in India, developed by Serum Institute of India. It is an intra nasal spray in powder-form which needs to be directly delivered in the nasal cavity. It is priced at Rs. 158 per dose and available in the 5-vial pack-for Rs. 790.

Side effects- For children-cold, fever, running nose, headache, cough wheezing and occasional stomach pain and vomiting. For adults-runny nose, chest congestion, sore throat, headache.

Which is a better vaccine for swine flu- intra muscular or intra nasal spray?

Dr. Agam says “It is quite debatable but since we are taking the intra muscular influenza vaccine from about 7 years (for influenza), so I personally recommend intramuscular.”

Here are the benefits and Drawbacks of both the vaccines to help you make your decision

Intramuscular Vaccine

Benefits-

- Can be administered to most people including those with weak immune system and pregnant women.
- It is more effective against Swine flu

Drawbacks-

- Is to be administered by an injection.

Intranasal Vaccine

Benefits-

- Is non invasive, can be administered directly through the nose.
- Is said to be more effective than intramuscular because it travels in the same pathway as the swine flu virus.

Drawback-

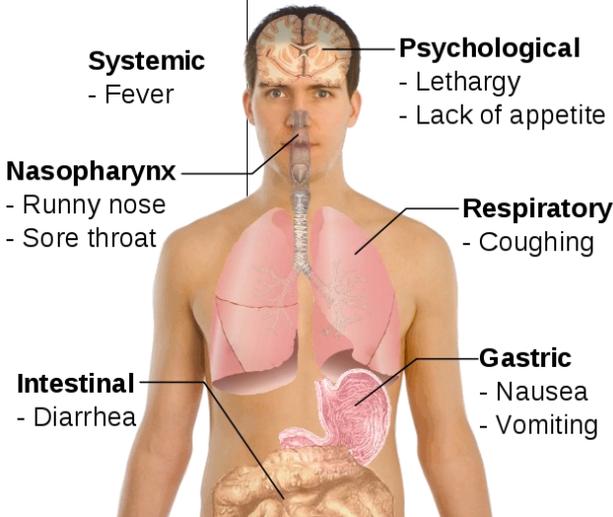
- Cannot be administered to those over 49 years of age.
- Cannot be administered to those with weakened immune system or pregnant women.
- The vaccine works well in the cooler passages of the nose but not in the warmer environment of the lungs.

If you are not vaccinated-

- Cover your mouth whenever you are sneezing.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap.
- Clean hard surfaces like door knobs and remotes with a cleaning product.
- Use a hand sanitizer when outside.

Swine flu is extremely contagious and spreads through air so it is difficult to prevent swine flu effectively without a vaccine, especially those in the risk group need to get them vaccinated.

Symptoms of Swine flu



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