

## REFRESHER: UNDERSTAND & COPE WITH STRESS

Knowing the symptoms of stress is the first step to managing stress.

## TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS AND FREQUENT FLYERS

Practical preventive measures & useful tips while travelling during this swine flu period.



the  
**Work Life  
Compass**

**SPECIAL EDITION**

# H1N1 Swine Influenza – **BEST DEFENCE**

*H1N1 Swine Influenza (Swine Flu) has become an increasing concern for many around the globe, particularly over the past week. Human Dynamic, your Work Life Coaching™ (EAP) provider understands that you, your family, friends, and colleagues may be feeling anxious about this possible pandemic. We list here some basic information, preventative measures, and coping strategies to deal with the stress associated with this disease.*

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SWINE FLU**

Media attention has caused much alarm in many sectors of society. You may have experienced fear, panic and confusion as a result of these reports. Here are some quick facts about Swine Flu and what you can do to cope.

*(information as of 28 April 2009)*

### WHAT IS SWINE FLU OR H1N1?

Swine Influenza (Swine Flu) is a contagious respiratory disease of pigs caused by the type A influenza virus. The most common subtype, H1N1, regularly causes outbreaks of influenza in pigs round the year. The current strain is a new variation of the H1N1 virus, a genetic mix of human and animal versions. While the virus causes regular outbreaks in pigs, people usually are not affected by Swine Flu unless they have been in close contact with infected pigs. The 'original' version didn't spread from person to person, but this mutated strain appears to be doing just that.

### HOW WILL IT AFFECT HUMANS?

Although this new virus is called "Swine Flu," it is not transmitted from pigs to humans, nor acquired by eating pork products. Like other respiratory diseases, it is spread from person to person through respiratory droplets. When people cough or sneeze, the infected mucus or phlegm spreads outwards from the source. The virus can then enter another host when he or she breathes in, or by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus.

### WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO GETS SWINE FLU? (THE SYMPTOMS)

The symptoms of Swine Flu in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza. An infected person may develop the following.

- Fever
- Chills
- Lethargy/fatigue
- Body aches and joint pain
- Lack of appetite
- Cough
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea

It is important to bear in mind that these symptoms can also be caused by many other conditions. It is best to consult a doctor if symptoms develop. A lab test will be required to diagnose Swine Flu.

### WHICH COUNTRIES ARE AFFECTED IN THE CURRENT OUTBREAK?

As of 19:15 GMT, 28 April 2009, seven countries have officially reported confirmed cases of swine influenza A/H1N1 infection (Source: World Health Organization): **Mexico (epicenter), United States, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Spain, Israel.**

Countries with suspected cases include: **Brazil, Guatemala, Peru, Australia, and South Korea, and seven EU states (Denmark, Sweden, Greece, the Czech Republic, Germany and Italy).**

### CAN I BE IMMUNIZED AGAINST SWINE FLU AND CAN IT BE TREATED?

The H1N1 Swine Flu viruses are externally very different from human H1N1 viruses and, therefore, vaccines for human seasonal flu would not provide protection from H1N1 Swine Flu viruses. The seasonal influenza vaccine will likely help provide partial protection against swine H3N2, but not swine H1N1 viruses.

Several antiviral medications exist that can help in limiting the symptoms and the course of the disease, but they only help when started within about 2 days of symptom onset and there is no guarantee that the particular virus strain is susceptible. These drugs are by prescription only, and the decision to begin therapy will have to be made with your doctor.

### DOES IT MEAN I SHOULD STOP EATING PORK MEAT AND PRODUCTS?

Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. As long as pork meat and products are properly handled and cooked, they are safe for consumption. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F/70°C (typical cooking temperatures) kills the Swine Flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.



## WHAT PREVENTATIVE MEASURES CAN I TAKE?

Other than keeping abreast with the situation in your country, here are some things you can do:

### MINIMIZE THE RISK OF FALLING SICK BY PROTECTING YOURSELF:

The preventative measures you can take are similar to those employed during the SARS and the Avian Flu pandemics. These are excellent practices to follow even if we're not facing an outbreak. Remember, your best defense usually requires you to keep the most basic and simple habits!

#### • ENSURE GOOD VENTILATION:

- Keep your windows open and maintain good air flow.
- Where possible, keep at least 1 meter from others to decrease the risk of transmission.
- Avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation.
- If a number of people are having flu-like symptoms at the workplace, workers may be advised to work from home. The same applies to schooling children.

#### • MAINTAIN GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE:

- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. Tissues are best as they can be thrown straight into a rubbish bin.
- Keep your hands clean. Wash frequently and thoroughly with soap and water.
- Use your own hand towel to thoroughly dry your hands. Change towels often and do not share with others. Alternatively, use paper towels and dispose of them immediately after use.
- Wash your hands when they are contaminated by respiratory secretions e.g. after sneezing.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth. If necessary, wash your hands before touching them.
- Keep your home and office environments clean. Wipe furniture (including telephones) regularly (at least once a day) with a piece of towel soaked with diluted household bleach (i.e. adding 1 part of household bleach to 99 parts of water), and then wipe with a piece of towel soaked with water.



#### • BUILD UP GOOD BODY IMMUNITY:

- Take proper meals and have balanced diets.
- Keep yourself well-hydrated. Consume 8-10 glasses of water each day to flush toxins from your system. This will also help in maintaining moisture and mucous production in your sinuses.
- Exercise regularly.
- Have adequate rest and sleep. Although this varies from person to person, in general, 6-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night helps to keep your immune system at optimal flu-fighting level.
- Minimize stress.
- Quit smoking.



### IF YOU FALL ILL:

- Stay home and get sufficient rest.
- If you live alone, stay in regular phone/email contact with family and friends.
- Stay away from groups.
- Remember to cover your mouth and nose if you sneeze or cough. Wash and dry your hands afterwards.
- When taking care of a sick family member, you should use a mask (a piece tissue or clean cloth can substitute). If the mask gets wet, have it changed.
- To reduce fever, drink plenty of fluids, be compliant with medication, and sponge bathe or take a tepid bath - don't 'wrap up warm'.
- If you have recently returned from overseas and are feeling unwell with symptoms such as cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, headaches or muscle aches, call your doctor for advice.



### MANAGE ANXIETY:

- Seek information about H1N1 virus from your doctor or local health authority. If you are troubled or confused by information available on various media (including TV, newspapers, the Internet etc), verify what you see or hear with relevant authorities.
- Consult a doctor immediately if you develop flu symptoms or other reported symptoms.
- Share your worries with your friends and family members for support or advice.
- Maintain regular contact with your children's school teachers and/or authorities.
- If you are experiencing intense emotional reactions, consider that there may be other issues bothering you that you may need to have addressed.
- If you find yourself struggling in an attempt to overcome your worries and anxiety over Swine Flu, you may find it helpful to speak to a counselor.
- To contact your local EAP consultant, call Human Dynamic or any of its affiliate partners on the local hotline (please refer to your call card or login at [www.humandynamic.com/hotlines](http://www.humandynamic.com/hotlines) for more information).



**It is important to recognize that your personal reactions to the event are normal. However, if your reactions are long-lasting or overwhelming, please know that you can share them confidentially with our Work Life Coaches (EAP consultants), who are just a phone call away...**

*Due to the evolving nature of this illness, the information provided may be superseded by new findings. If in doubt, please contact your local health authority, physician, or mental healthcare professional.*

## UNDERSTAND & COPE WITH STRESS

KNOWING THE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS IS THE FIRST STEP TO MANAGING STRESS.

### PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Sleep disturbance, such as insomnia and nightmares
- Loss of appetite
- Fatigue
- Muscular tension and pain

### EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

- Anxiety
- Fear
- Depression
- Confusion

### THINKING PATTERN & RESPONSES

- Overgeneralization
- Negative self-talk
- Forgetfulness
- Declining concentration & analytical ability

DOING THE RIGHT THING MAY HELP YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES COPE WITH STRESS!

#### DO

- Acknowledge & accept your responses  
*"It's Swine Flu that's abnormal. My worry about it is perfectly normal."*
- Share your feelings with others to reduce stress  
*"Bob, I'm concerned about the disease."*
- Practice positive self-talk  
*"As long as I follow the guidelines & take precautionary measures, I should be alright!"*
- Use relaxation techniques  
*Take deep breaths, practice muscle relaxation, exercise regularly, etc.*
- Keep updated and analyze the situation with sound logic and judgement  
*"I should listen to reliable news (newspapers, radio) about the condition & ignore rumours about Swine Flu / H5N1." Maintain a healthy diet to strengthen your immune system."*
- Give yourself time to reflect on your thoughts  
*"Am I over-reacting?"*

#### DON'T

- Deny your responses  
*"It won't happen to me so there is nothing to be bothered about Swine Flu / H1N1."*
- Hide/Suppress your feelings. This may increase your stress.  
*"I don't want anybody to know how I feel."*
- Think negatively  
*"The virus has spread to other parts of the world and there are more and more human cases. I will be the next one!"*
- Seek relaxation from consuming substances  
*Avoid taking alcohol, drugs, caffeine or tobacco to relax. This might increase the stress response of your body.*
- Make exaggerations or overgeneralizations without evidence or analysis  
*"No food is safe now."*
- Have bad eating habits  
*Avoid over- or under-eating.*
- Let phobia and negative emotions control you  
*"I better not leave my home!"*



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### HOW TO CONTACT YOUR WORK LIFE COACH?

- ✓ Call your local Work Life Program™ (EAP) hotline
- ✓ Email us: [info@humandynamic.com](mailto:info@humandynamic.com)
- ✓ Login to: <http://myworklife.humandynamic.com>
- ✓ Schedule a confidential face-to-face session with your personal coach



# TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS AND FREQUENT FLYERS

## PRACTICAL PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

As of 28th April 2009, there are no travel restriction advisories by the World Health Organisation for Swine Flu. They do however recommend for people who are ill to delay international travel and for people developing symptoms following international travel to seek medical attention, in line with guidance from national authorities.

Across the globe, countries have stepped up on measures, including tightening border and immigration controls, to manage the Swine Flu Outbreak.

If you intend to travel to affected countries, you should adopt the following measures to minimize your risk of acquiring Swine Flu:

- Avoid contact with livestock and pigs.
- Avoid handling or eating raw or undercooked pork meat, or foods containing uncooked pork meat.
- Avoid places such as commercial or backyard farms and markets selling pigs.
- Avoid crowded areas with poor ventilation.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling livestock and pigs, and when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions e.g. after sneezing.
- Observe good personal and environmental hygiene.
- Maintain good body resistance through a balanced diet, regular exercise, having adequate rest, reducing stress and not smoking.



### IF YOU FALL ILL WHEN OVERSEAS

Consult a local doctor as soon as possible and refrain from travelling until you are certified fit by the doctor.

### IF YOU SUSPECT YOU HAVE SWINE FLU AFTER RETURNING TO YOUR COUNTRY

Consult a doctor as soon as possible and inform your doctor if you have had contact with live pigs or have recently travelled to a country which has cases of Swine Flu.

### IF YOU ARE OVERSEAS AND ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE SITUATION

Please contact your local Human Dynamic consultant.

Due to the evolving nature of this illness, the information provided may be superseded by new findings. If in doubt, please contact your local health authority, physician, or mental healthcare professional.