

Responding to Swine Flu

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The outbreak of swine flu in Mexico and the United States, with confirmed cases now in 19 other countries, has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), and a public health emergency by the U.S. government. While it's easy to stay glued in front of the TV or Internet, keeping track of every aspect of the unfolding events, getting caught up in fear and hysteria clearly isn't a healthy response. In the face of a legitimate public health concern, here are a few practical guidelines to help you stay calm and protect yourself and your community.

Get the FACTS

The swine flu is an influenza virus that spreads in the same way as other respiratory viruses such as the common cold – through the transmission of infected respiratory particles. Swine flu is spread from one person to another through coughing or sneezing. It is not transmitted by eating pork or pork products.

Usually swine flu only affects pigs; however, when people are in close contact with pigs (such as those working in the swine industry) disease may be spread to humans.

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of regular seasonal influenza and can easily be remembered by the mnemonic FACTS: Fever, Aches, Cough and Chills, Tired, Sudden Onset. Some people with swine flu also report runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Protect Yourself with Good Hygiene

WHO issued the pandemic warning not to create panic, but to make people aware of measures they can take to prevent the spread of the swine flu virus. The more people practice these types of preventive measures, the less impact there will be.

The following good hygiene practices will help reduce transmission of the swine flu virus as well as other airborne illnesses:

- Wash your hands with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- When you do cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue and throw it away in the trash after you use it. If a tissue is not available, sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as germs are spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. If close contact cannot be avoided, transmission can be minimized by using a disposable medical facemask or an N95 respirator.
- Some viruses can survive on non-porous surfaces for up to 2 hours, so wipe down high traffic surfaces such as doorknobs, keyboards, and phones. Use soap and water, anti-viral wipes, or a mild bleach solution.
- At this point the WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have recommended that people avoid non-essential travel to Mexico; however, no other travel advisories have been issued as of this writing.

Enhance your Immunity

- Use natural techniques to boost your immune system. This will increase your overall health and well-being, and will help you to fight the disease if you are exposed to it.
- Don't foster feelings of fear and worry by ingesting too much news from the TV and Internet. Fear causes a state of stress in your body that weakens the immune system. Give yourself a break from the media barrage and instead check in periodically to trusted websites such as the CDC, which offers up-to-date information without the sensationalism. (<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>).
- Practice **deep abdominal breathing**, which brings your physiology back to a state of peace and enhances your immune system. Other practices such as **meditation**, **yoga**, tai chi, and qi gong can also bring you to a state of relaxation.
- Continue to nourish yourself with plenty of fluids, nutritious foods, and adequate rest. Vitamins and minerals play key roles in the functioning of the immune system, so make sure to eat a balanced diet.
- Certain herbs may also help boost the immune system and may have anti-viral properties. The Ayurvedic rejuvenating herbs, including amalaki, ashwagandha, and guduchi, have traditionally been used to support immune function. We have combined these herbs with key nutrients in the Chopra Center immune support supplement **Vedamune**.
- Other immune-enhancing herbs that may be helpful include astragalus, pau d'arco, and echinacea. Before you take any supplements, consult with your doctor.

Seek Medical Care

Prevention is our major line of defense, but sometimes we still come down with illness. If you do have flu symptoms, stay home from work or school and limit your contact with others. Contact your health care provider as soon as possible as there are anti-viral medications that can make the illness milder and help you feel better faster when taken within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms.

Homeopathic remedies such as Oscilloccinum may also help to alleviate the symptoms. Rest and drink plenty of fluids. Go to urgent care or the emergency room if you have unusual symptoms such as high fever, difficulty breathing, worsening cough, or persistent vomiting and diarrhea.

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Swine Flu And Ayurveda by Dr. Joban Modha & Dr. Neha Tank Modha

Swine influenza (also called H1N1 flu, swine flu, hog flu, and pig flu) is an infection by any one of several types of swine influenza virus. Swine influenza virus (SIV) is any strain of the influenza family of viruses that is endemic in pigs. As of 2009, the known SIV strains include influenza C and the subtypes of influenza A known as H1N1, H1N2, H3N1, H3N2, and H2N3.

Swine influenza virus is common throughout pig populations worldwide. Transmission of the virus from pigs to humans is not common and does not always lead to human influenza, often resulting only in the production of antibodies in the blood. People with regular exposure to pigs are at increased risk of swine flu infection. The meat of an infected animal poses no risk of infection when properly cooked.

The Swine flu has been compared to other similar types of influenza virus in terms of mortality: "in the US it appears that for every 1000 people who get infected, about 40 people need admission to hospital and about one person dies". There are fears that swine flu will become a major global pandemic in the winter months, with many countries planning major vaccination campaigns.

Influenza is quite common in pigs; the main route of transmission is through direct contact between infected and uninfected animals.

People who work with poultry and swine, especially people with intense exposures, are at increased risk of zoonotic infection with influenza virus endemic in these animals, and constitute a population of human hosts in which zoonosis and reassortment can co-occur. Other professions at particular risk of infection are veterinarians and meat processing workers, although the risk of infection for both of these groups is lower than that of farm workers.

Main Signs and symptoms of swine flu:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in humans the symptoms of the 2009 "swine flu" H1N1 virus are similar to those of influenza and of influenza-like illness in general.

Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. The 2009 outbreak has shown an increased percentage of patients reporting diarrhea and vomiting. The 2009 H1N1 virus is not zoonotic swine flu, as it is not transmitted from pigs to humans, but from person to person.

The most common cause of death is respiratory failure, other causes of death are pneumonia (leading to sepsis), high fever (leading to neurological problems), dehydration (from excessive vomiting and diarrhea) and electrolyte imbalance. Fatalities are more likely in young children and the elderly.

Prevention :

According to Ayurveda, prevention is always better than cure, and the primary aim goal of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of a healthy person. As stated: "Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam..." here are the few preventive measures according to modern science and Ayurveda.

Prevention of swine influenza has three components:

- prevention in swine,
- prevention of transmission to humans,
- and prevention of its spread among humans.

The current trivalent influenza vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against the new 2009 H1N1 strain, so the control of swine influenza by vaccination has become more difficult in recent decades. But you don't worry even if you are not vaccinated. Start practicing Pranayama, especially "hot Pranayama like Bhastrika and Kapalbhanti"! This will improve your lungs capacity and immunity to combat any infections from the viruses.

Swine flu cannot be spread by pork products, since the virus is not transmitted through food but it spreads between humans through coughing or sneezing and people touching something with the virus on it and then touching their own nose or mouth.

The swine flu in humans is most contagious during the first five days of the illness although some people, most commonly children, can remain contagious for up to ten days. Diagnosis can be made by sending a specimen, collected during the first five days for analysis. So as soon as you feel discomfort with symptoms like sneezing, coughing and any other respiratory symptoms, start to have herbal tea, which is very common practice in India. The recipe of such herbal tea knows almost every mother or grandmother knows in India! well, if you don't know: let me explain:

Boil approximately 200ml of potable water, till it remains half and mix the following herbs in it.

- Juice of 10 to 15 fresh leaves of Tulasi (Basil),
- 5 ml of fresh ginger root juice,
- half spoon powder of cloves,
- half spoon powder of cinnamon bark,
- half spoon powder of peppermint leaves,
- half spoon powder of cardamom,
- half spoon of turmeric powder,
- half spoon of rock salt

Mix all these properly, add one spoon of honey when the tea is luke warm and have it twice or thrice a day.

These all-around wonder spices are said to help detoxify the liver, fight allergies, stimulate digestion, and boost immunity. All these drugs have anti viral, cleansing and antioxidant properties. It helps the free flow of oxygen to the brain, helps enhance digestion and circulation and stimulates the appetite. They are excellent for balancing Vaata and Kapha, which are the prominent Dosha in Swine influenza or any other respiratory track infections.

- Recommendations to prevent spread of the virus among humans include using standard infection control against influenza. This includes frequent washing of hands with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after being out in public.
- Chance of transmission is also reduced by disinfecting household surfaces, which can be done effectively with a diluted chlorine bleach solution.
- Experts agree that hand-washing can help prevent viral infections, including ordinary influenza and the swine flu virus.
- Influenza can spread in coughs or sneezes, but an increasing body of evidence shows small droplets containing the virus can linger on tabletops, telephones and other surfaces and be transferred via the fingers to the mouth, nose or eyes.
- Alcohol-based gel or foam hand sanitizers work well to destroy viruses and bacteria.
- The Puja being done in Hindus has the similar disinfecting properties. Studies have shown that lighting the lamp of cow's Ghee has anti viral property. The Dhupana being done with the help of natural sticks (Agarbattis) and Guggulu has very effective disinfectant properties.
- Anyone with flu-like symptoms such as a sudden fever, cough or muscle aches should stay away from work or public transportation and should contact a doctor for advice.
- Social distancing is another tactic. It means staying away from other people who might be infected and can include avoiding large gatherings, spreading out a little at work, or perhaps staying home and lying low if an infection is spreading in a community.
- Public health and other responsible authorities have action plans which may request or require social distancing actions depending on the severity of the outbreak.

According to Ayurveda daily and dietary habits plays a major role in any disease. If your digestive fire is normal, your immunity will remain powerful and thus no infection can overrule you. So one should follow the ideal dietary regimen during seasons like monsoon and winter when the maximum chances are there for viral infections.

- One should avoid sleeping during the day hours.
- One should avoid traveling or being outdoors during the early hours of the day when there is dew and cold winds blow.
- Oil massage with oil possessing warm quality is beneficial.
- Clean and dry clothes should be worn.
- Individuals should avoid direct and strong cold winds.
- Avoid skipping meals.
- Try to move around the place of work instead of sitting in one place or do some kind of physical work. This will help you to refresh yourself, especially when you feel dull & lethargic.
- Try to avoid over exertion.
- Not delay or skip your meals, you should take meals at regular timings & in fixed quantities.
- Avoid damp, humid and cold weather, and environment.
- Avoid use of air conditioners.
- Drink a glass of water with two teaspoons of honey every day early in the morning.
- Always have fresh meals, prepared using minimum quantity of oil, or prepared with the help of Cow's ghee.
- Dry chatni & dry vegetables are recommended.
- Sprinkle your salads with dry ginger powder, and black pepper powder.
- Chewing of a bite of ginger before meals with little bit of salt is helpful to improve.
- Always choose warm food over cold food.
- Pickles made of 'Raw haldi' are recommended.
- Daily use of 'Honey' helps to control the excessive kapha.

Avoid:

- Regular use of sweets, butter, cheese, paneer etc.
- Dairy products especially curd and butter.
- Refrigerated, rewarmed, day old stale food, etc.
- Foods containing preservatives, artificial flavours, colours etc. Sauces, vinegar, pickles, chatani etc.
- Non-vegetarian food.
- Excessive use of Cheese, paneer, yogurt etc.

Ayurveda Treatment for Viral infections in cold seasons like Monsoon and winter:

If a person becomes sick with swine flu, antiviral drugs can make the illness milder and make the patient feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if

started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

Beside antivirals, supportive care at home or in hospital, focuses on controlling fevers, relieving pain and maintaining fluid balance, as well as identifying and treating any secondary infections or other medical problems.

The virus isolates in the 2009 outbreak have been found resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. In the U. S., on April 27, 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued Emergency Use Authorizations to make available Relenza and Tamiflu antiviral drugs to treat the swine influenza virus in cases for which they are currently unapproved.

In such condition following Ayurveda drugs may be started as soon as possible. Few of these drugs have been found very effective in current research works and are being practiced in India since thousands of years for combating various seasonal and viral infections.

- [Sanjivani vati](#)
- [Sitopaladi churna](#)
- [Sanshamani vati](#)
- [Vasadi vati](#)
- [Trikatu](#)
- [Chyavanprash](#)
- [Yastimadhu ghan vati](#)
- [Haridrakhand](#)

Panchakarma procedures like Nasya Karma and Sadya Vamana Karma are also very useful for all respiratory track infections.

It is advisable to remain under medical supervision of a qualified and experienced Vaidya. We have seen miraculous results of above said drugs in various viral infections in thousands of patients in our clinical experience.

There is no doubt that above said drugs and Panchakarma helps to expel Kapha from the body and also helps to stop or to slower the viral load from the body, which is ultimately responsible for high grade fever and other symptoms which are responsible for high rate of mortality

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Source: <http://mangalorean.com>

Interesting Health News

Indian herb: Tulsi (basil) can help keep swine flu away: Ayurvedic experts

Lucknow, May 27: Wonder herb Tulsi can not only keep the dreaded swine flu at bay but also help in fast recovery of an afflicted person, Ayurvedic practitioners claim.

"The anti-flu property of Tulsi has been discovered by medical experts across the world quite recently. Tulsi improves the body's overall defence mechanism including its ability to fight viral diseases. It was successfully used in combating Japanese Encephalitis and the same theory applies to swine flu," Dr U K Tiwari, a herbal medicine practitioner says.

Apart from acting as a preventive medicine in case of swine flu, Tulsi can help the patient recover faster.

"Even when a person has already contracted swine flu, Tulsi can help in speeding up the recovery process and also help in strengthening the immune system of the body," he claims.

Dr Bhupesh Patel, a lecturer at Gujarat Ayurved University, Jamnagar is also of the view that Tulsi can play an important role in controlling swine flu.

"Tulsi can control swine flu and it should be taken in fresh form. Juice or paste of at least 20-25 medium sized leaves should be consumed twice a day on an empty stomach."

This increases the resistance of the body and, thereby, reduces the chances of inviting swine flu," believes Patel.

Please visit us at <http://chakrapaniayurveda.com/tulsi.html> for fresh Tulsi preparation