

## SWINE FLU

Swine influenza (also swine flu) refers to influenza caused by any virus of the family Orthomyxoviridae that is endemic to pig (swine) populations. Strains endemic in swine are called swine influenza virus (SIV), and all known strains of SIV are classified as Influenzavirus A (common) or Influenzavirus C (rare). Influenzavirus B has not been reported in swine. All three clades, Influenzavirus A, B, and C, are endemic in humans. People who work with poultry and swine, especially people with intense exposures, are at risk of infection from these animals if the animals carry a strain that is also able to infect humans. SIV can mutate into a form that allows it to pass from human to human. The strain responsible for the 2009 swine flu outbreak is believed to have undergone this mutation.

### **Swine flu in humans**

The epidemic began in Mexico, though in late March and April of 2009, cases of human infection with swine flu were reported in Southern California, in San Antonio Texas. This confirms the contagious nature of the disease in that it does spread from human to human.

#### **How the virus spreads:**

The symptoms and transmission of the swine flu from human to human is much like that of seasonal flu. It is believed to be spread between humans through coughing or sneezing of infected people and touching something with the virus on it and then touching their own nose or mouth. **Swine flu cannot be spread by pork products, since the virus is not transmitted through food. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills bacteria and viruses.**

#### **Infection and lab testing:**

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning one day before development of symptoms and up to 7 or more days after becoming ill. (One can infect another before knowing that they themselves are ill).

Generally, 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

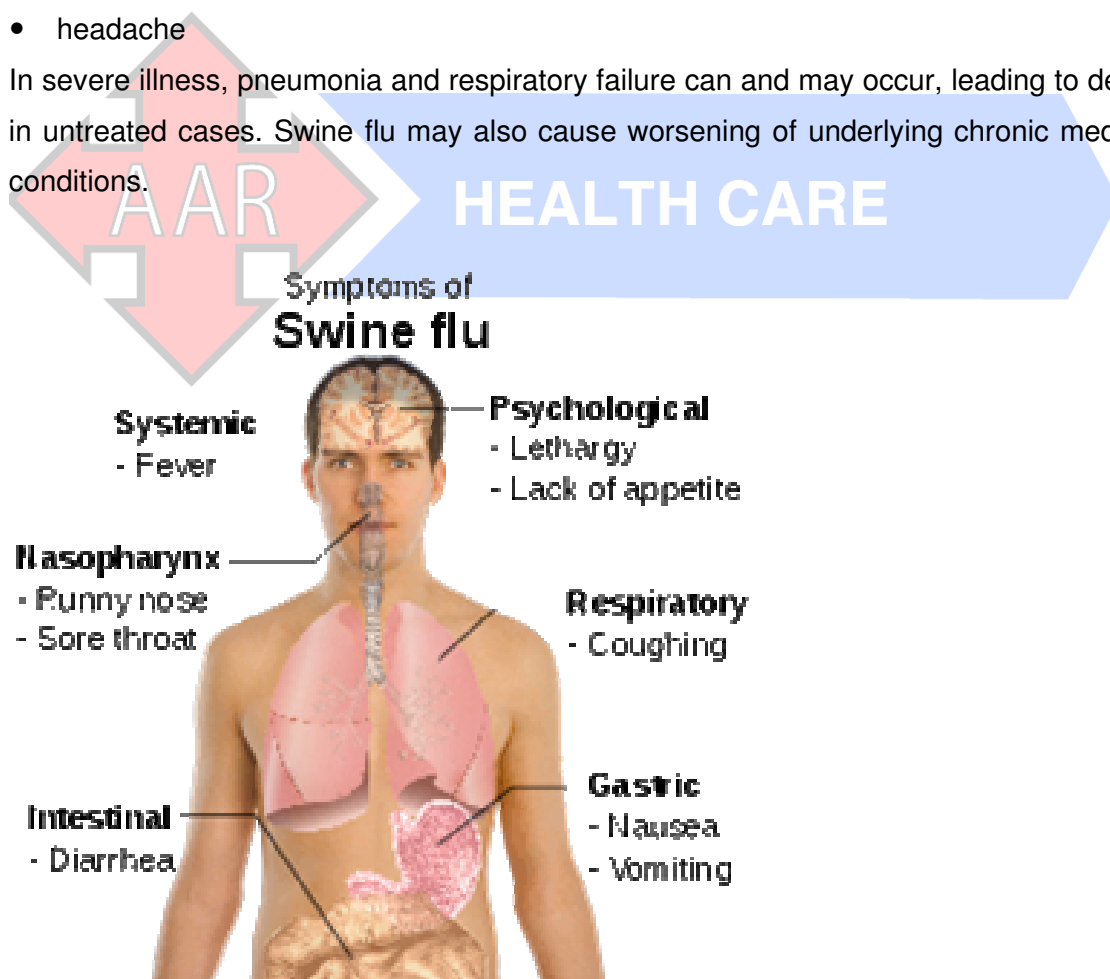
days. Diagnosis can be made by sending a specimen, collected during the first five days, for analysis in designated laboratories.

### Main signs and symptoms of swine flu in humans

The symptoms of swine flu in humans are similar to the symptoms of regular flu and include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Lethargy/fatigue
- Lack of appetite
- Coughing
- Runny nose,
- Sore throat,
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Body aches
- headache

In severe illness, pneumonia and respiratory failure can and may occur, leading to death in untreated cases. Swine flu may also cause worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.



Because these symptoms are not specific to swine flu, a differential diagnosis of *probable* swine flu requires not only symptoms but also a high likelihood of swine flu due to the person's recent history. A diagnosis of *confirmed* swine flu requires laboratory testing of a respiratory sample (a simple nose and throat swab) which can then be analyzed by rapid kits in special labs.

### **Prevention**

- Frequent washing of hands with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after being out in public.
- People should avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes with their hands unless they've washed their hands.
- If people do cough, they should cough into a tissue and throw it in the garbage immediately, cough into their elbow, or, if they cough in their hand, they should wash their hands immediately.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Get plenty of sleep, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious foods.
- Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Droplets from a sneeze or cough may land on surfaces like desks and will infect those that come into contact with it.

### **Treatment**

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against the swine flu. CDC recommends use of antiviral drugs for treatment of infection. These are prescription drugs that available on doctor's request.

### **Response by Kenya Government**

Surveillance for swine flu especially for travelers from Mexico and southern U.S at JKIA and Moi international Airport. Surveillance systems set up to monitor bird flu (26 stations) have been reactivated for swine flu contagion. Medication is available in the country if need be.

