

Useful contacts

Call **0800 1 513 513** to hear the latest information on swine flu.

England:

www.nhs.uk

www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu

Scotland:

www.nhs24.com

Wales:

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

www.wales.gov.uk/health

Northern Ireland:

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

www.nidirect.gov.uk

If you are planning to travel abroad, check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice at www.fco.gov.uk/travel or call 0845 850 2829 for the latest information.

Essential information concerning travel, schools and colleges, and the workplace will be published on www.direct.gov.uk

WHAT IS THIS LEAFLET FOR?

The UK governments have produced this leaflet to give you information about swine flu. It tells you:

What swine flu is and how it could spread.

What the UK governments have done to prepare for a wider outbreak of flu.

What you can do to protect yourself and others against flu.

Other actions you can take in case swine flu becomes more widespread.

What to do if you think you have flu symptoms.

How you can keep up to date with the latest information about swine flu.

Please keep this information safe. You may need to refer back to it if swine flu becomes more widespread.

WHAT IS SWINE FLU AND HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM ORDINARY FLU?

Swine flu is a respiratory disease and has some elements of a virus found in pigs. There is no evidence of this disease circulating in pigs in the UK and scientists are investigating its origins.

Swine flu has been confirmed in a number of countries and it is spreading from human to human, which could lead to what is referred to as a pandemic flu outbreak.

Pandemic flu is different from ordinary flu because it's a new flu virus that appears in humans and spreads very quickly from person to person worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) is closely monitoring cases of swine flu globally to see whether this virus develops into a pandemic.

Because it's a new virus, no one will have immunity to it and everyone could be at risk of catching it. This includes healthy adults as well as older people, young children and those with existing medical conditions.

HOW DOES SWINE FLU SPREAD?

Flu viruses are made up of tiny particles that can be spread through the droplets that come out of your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.

When you cough or sneeze without covering your nose and mouth with a tissue, those droplets can spread and others will be at risk of breathing them in.

If you cough or sneeze into your hand, those droplets and the germs in them are then easily spread from your hand to any hard surfaces that you touch, and they can live on those surfaces for some time. Everyday items such as door handles, computer keyboards, mobile and ordinary phones and the TV remote control are all common surfaces where flu viruses can be found.

If other people touch these surfaces and then touch their faces, the germs can enter their systems and they can become infected. That's how all cold and flu viruses, including swine flu, are passed on from person to person.

