



Hands on Safety

"Being Safe Is No Accident"



Statewide Health and Safety Committee Changes



Please help us in welcoming our new committee member:



Buffy Andrews

We would also like to say goodbye to Al Lazaroff and Julie Walburn and thank them for all of their hard work while on the committee.

From the DRC Statewide Health and Safety Committee



H1N1 Swine Flu FAQ

Answers to your questions about swine flu.

By Daniel J. DeNoon

WebMD Feature

What is swine flu?

Like people, pigs can get influenza (flu), but swine flu viruses aren't the same as human flu viruses. Swine flu doesn't often infect people, and the rare human cases that have occurred in the past have mainly affected people who had direct contact with pigs. But the current "swine flu" outbreak is different. It's caused by a new swine flu virus that has changed in ways that allow it to spread from person to person - - and it's happening among people who haven't had any contact with pigs.

That makes it a human flu virus. To distinguish it both from flu viruses that infect mainly pigs and from the seasonal influenza A H1N1 viruses that have been in circulation for many years, the CDC calls the virus "novel influenza A (H1N1) virus" and the World Health Organization calls it "pandemic (H1N1) 2009." The CDC calls swine flu illness "H1N1 flu" and the World Health Organization calls it "pandemic influenza A (H1N1)."

What are swine flu symptoms?

Symptoms of swine flu are like regular flu symptoms and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Many people with swine flu have had diarrhea and vomiting. Nearly everyone with flu has at least two of these symptoms. But these symptoms can also be caused by many other conditions. That means that you and your doctor can't know, just based on your symptoms, if you've got swine flu. Health care professionals many offer a rapid flu test, although a negative result doesn't necessarily mean you don't have the flu.

Like seasonal flu, pandemic swine flu can cause neurologic symptoms in children. These events are rare, but, as cases associated with seasonal flu have shown, they can be very severe and often fatal. Symptoms include seizures or changes in mental status (confusion or sudden cognitive or behavioral changes). It's not clear why these symptoms occur, although they may be caused by Reye's syndrome. Reye's syndrome usually occurs in children with a viral illness who have taken aspirin - - something that should always be avoided.

Only lab tests can definitively show whether you've got swine flu. State health departments can do these tests. But given the large volume of samples coming in to state labs, these tests are being reserved for patients with severe flu symptoms. Currently, doctors are reserving antiviral drugs for people with or at risk of severe influenza.

H1N1 Swine Flu FAQ (con't)

If I think I have swine flu, what should I do? When should I see my doctor?

If you have flu symptoms, stay home, and when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. Afterward, throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands. That will help prevent your flu from spreading.

If you have only mild flu symptoms, you do not need medical attention unless your illness gets worse. But if you are in one of the groups at high risk of severe disease, contact your doctor at the first sign of flu-like illness. In such cases, the CDC recommends that people call or email their doctor before rushing to an emergency room.

But there are emergency warning signs.

Children should be given **urgent** medical attention if they:

- Have fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Have bluish or gray skin color
- Are not drinking enough fluid
- Are not waking up or not interacting
- Have severe or persistent vomiting
- Are so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Have flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and a worse cough
- Have fever with a rash
- Have a fever and then have a seizure or sudden mental or behavioral change.

Adults should seek **urgent** medical attention if they have:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve, but then come back with worsening fever or cough

Keep in mind that your doctor will not be able to determine whether you have swine flu, but he or she may take a sample from you and send it to a state health department lab for testing to see if it's swine flu. If your doctor suspects swine flu, he or she would be able to write you a prescription for Tamiflu or Relenza. Most U.S. swine flu patients have made a full recovery without antiviral drugs.

H1N1 Swine Flu FAQ (con't)

How does swine flu spread? Is it airborne?

The new swine flu virus apparently spreads just like regular flu. You could pick up germs directly from droplets from the cough or sneeze of an infected person, or by touching an object they recently touched, and then touching your eyes, mouth, or nose, delivering their germs for your own infection. That's why you should make washing your hands a habit, even when you're not ill. Infected people can start spreading flu germs up to a day before symptoms start, and for up to seven days after getting sick, according to the CDC.

The swine flu virus can become airborne if you cough or sneeze without covering your nose and mouth, sending germs into the air. Ferret studies suggest that swine flu spreads less easily by small, airborne droplets than does seasonal flu. But it does spread by this route, and it may begin to spread even more readily as the new virus fully adapts to humans.

The new swine flu virus is a human virus spread by people and not by pigs. The only way to get the new swine flu is from another person.

How is swine flu treated?

Pandemic H1N1 swine flu virus is sensitive to the antiviral drugs Tamiflu and Relenza. These antiviral drugs are most effective when taken within 48 hours of the start of flu symptoms. Not everyone needs those drugs. Most people who come down with swine flu recover fully - - without antiviral treatment.

Tamiflu and Relenza can prevent swine flu, but the CDC urges even at-risk people to try to avoid using the drugs in this way. Not only is supply insufficient for preventive use, but preventive use appears to be a major factor in the few cases of drug-resistant H1N1 swine flu that have appeared.

Should I wear a face mask or respirator?

Short answer: *Maybe.* Face masks and respirators may very well offer extra protection, but should not be your first line of defense against either pandemic or seasonal flu.

How long does the flu virus survive on surfaces?

Flu bugs can survive for hours on surfaces. One study showed that flu viruses can live for up to 48 hours on hard, nonporous surfaces such as stainless steel and for up to 12 hours on cloth and tissues. The virus seems to survive for only minutes on your hands - - but that's plenty of time for you to transfer it to your mouth, nose, or eyes.

Can I still eat pork?

Yes. You can't get swine flu by eating pork, bacon, or other foods that come from pigs.

Maintaining Your Fireplace

As you snuggle in front of a cozy fire or bask in the warmth of your wood stove, you are taking part in a ritual of comfort and enjoyment handed down through the centuries. The last thing you are likely to be thinking about is the condition of your chimney. However, if you don't give some thought to it before you light those winter fires, your enjoyment may be very short-lived. Why? Dirty chimneys can cause chimney fires, which damage structures, destroy homes and injure or kill people.

Chimney fires can burn explosively - - noisy and dramatic enough to be detected by neighbors or passersby. Flames or dense smoke may shoot from the top of the chimney. Homeowners report being startled by a low rumbling sound that reminds them of a freight train or a low flying air plane. However, those are only the chimney fires you know about. Slow-burning chimney fires don't get enough air or have enough fuel to be as dramatic or visible. But, the temperatures they reach are very high and can cause as much damage to the chimney structure - and nearby combustible parts of the house - as their more spectacular cousins. With proper chimney system care, chimney fires are entirely preventable.

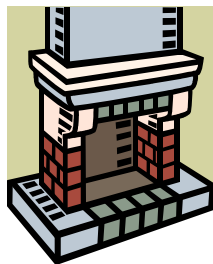
Creosote and Chimney Fires

Fireplaces and wood stoves are designed to safely contain wood-fueled fires, while providing heat for a home. The chimneys that serve them have the job of expelling the by-products of combustion - - the substances given off when wood burns.

As these substances exit the fireplace or wood stove, and flow up into the relatively cooler chimney, condensation occurs. The resulting residue that sticks to the inner walls of the chimney is called creosote. Creosote is black or brown in appearance. It can be crusty and flaky...tar-like, drippy and sticky...or shiny and hardened. Often, all forms will occur in one chimney system.

Whatever form it takes, creosote is highly combustible. If it builds up in sufficient quantities - - and catches fire inside the chimney flue - - the result will be a chimney fire. Although any amount of creosote can burn, sweeps are concerned when creosote builds up in sufficient quantities to sustain a long, hot, destructive chimney fire.

Certain conditions encourage the buildup of creosote, restricted air supply, unseasoned wood and cooler-than-normal chimney temperatures are all factors that can accelerate the buildup of creosote on chimney flue walls.



Ways to Avoid Chimney Fires

Chimney fires don't have to happen. Here are some ways to avoid them:

- Use seasoned woods only (dryness is more important than hard wood versus soft wood considerations).
- Build smaller, hotter fires that burn more completely and produce less smoke.
- Never burn cardboard boxes, wrapping paper, trash or Christmas trees; these can spark a chimney fire.
- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures where wood stoves are in use, so you can adjust burning practices as needed.
- Have the chimney inspected and cleaned on a regular basis.

Proper Maintenance

Clean chimneys don't catch fire. Have your solid fuel venting system inspected annually, and have it cleaned and repaired whenever needed. Your chimney sweep may have other maintenance recommendations depending on how you use your fireplace or stove. The Chimney Safety Institute of America recommends that you call on certified chimney sweeps, since they are regularly tested on their understanding of the complexities of chimney and venting systems.

Signs That You've Had a Chimney Fire

Since chimney fires can occur without anyone being aware of them...and since damage from such fires can endanger a home and its occupants, how do you tell if you've experienced a chimney fire?

Here are the signs a professional chimney sweep looks for:

- "Puffy" creosote, with rainbow colored streaks, that has expanded beyond creosote's normal form.
- Warped metal of the damper, metal smoke chamber, connector pipe or factory-built metal chimney.
- Cracked or collapsed flue tiles, or tiles with large chunks missing.
- Discolored and distorted rain cap.
- Creosote flakes and pieces found on the roof or ground.
- Roofing material damaged from hot creosote.
- Cracks in exterior masonry.
- Evidence of smoke escaping through mortar joints of masonry or tile liners.



Ways to Avoid Chimney Fires (con't)

If you think a chimney fire has occurred, call get a professional evaluation. If your suspicions are confirmed, a certified sweep will be able to make recommendations about how to bring the system back into compliance with safety standards. Depending on the situation, you might need a few flue tiles replaced, a relining system installed or an entire chimney rebuilt. Each situation is unique and will dictate its own solution.

What to Do if You Have a Chimney Fire

If you realize a chimney fire is occurring, follow these steps:

1. Get everyone out of the house, including yourself.
2. Call the fire department

If you can do so without risk to yourself, these additional steps may help save your home.

Remember, however, that homes are replaceable; lives are not:

1. Put a chimney fire extinguisher into the fireplace or wood stove.
2. Close the glass doors on the fireplace.
3. Close the air inlets on the wood stove.
4. Use a garden hose to spray down the roof (not the chimney) so the fire won't spread to the rest of the structure.
5. Monitor the exterior chimney temperature throughout the house for at least 2 or 3 hours after the fire is out.

Once it's over, have the chimney inspected for damage. Chimney fire damage and repair normally is covered by homeowner insurance policies.



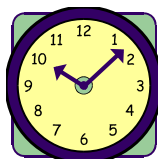
Fireplace and chimney information provided by Weather.com and The Chimney Safety Institute of America.



Home Maintenance Tasks



- Paint interior rooms while it's still warm enough to leave windows open. Ditto for shampooing or replacing carpets.
- Clean underneath range hood. Remove and clean or replace range hood filters.
- Use a vacuum with a narrow nozzle to clean condenser coils on the back or underneath your refrigerator.
- Remove window air-conditioning units and store them. If they are not removable, cover them with plastic to protect them over the winter.
- Watch for year-end close-out sales on lawn and garden equipment.
- Detach hoses in case of freezing temperatures. Remove all paints, caulks and liquid materials from garage or garden sheds.
- Check the operation of all ground-fault circuit interrupter outlets by pushing the "test" button. The "reset" button should pop out, indicating the receptacle is operating properly. Press in the reset button.
- Review the family fire escape plan with every household member.
- Check heating system including filters, pilot lights, and burners, and have the system serviced by a qualified professional.
- Check fire extinguishers to make sure they are not outdated, have lost pressure or are damaged.
- Unpack and test all electrical holiday decorations. Repair or discard any that do not function properly. Watch for sales on tools before and after the holiday season.
- Clean and vacuum dust from vents, baseboard heaters and cold-air returns.
- When setting clocks back to Standard Time, change batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.



Stowing Summer Tools and Equipment

Barbeques:

Wheel portable models to inside storage, but keep propane tanks outside, covered with a plastic bag or tarp. Propane poses an explosion risk indoors.

Lawn Mowers:

Tune the mower at summer's end to avoid the multitudes who take in mowers for a tune at the start of mowing season.

Garden Tools:

Dip shears, weeders, pruners, spades and other hand tools in sand mixed with motor oil to clean and lubricate before storing.

Lawn Furniture:

Portable, lightweight plastic lawn furniture goes inside. Heavier pieces, like wrought-iron, can be left out, protected by manufacturers' designed covers or large plastic bags from most hardware stores or online. Cushions go inside the garage or house.

Slips, Trips and Falls

According to the National Safety Council, nearly 15,000 deaths occur each year due to falls.

The following are a few pointers to help you prevent slips, trips, and falls at work and at home:

- Wear shoes that provide good traction.
- Keep floors and stairways clean and free of debris and spills.
- Carry only loads you can see over.
- Don't grope around in the dark. Turn the lights on or use a flashlight.
- Repair broken or uneven pavement, loose carpet, and floorboards that pose a tripping hazard.
- When walking up and down stairs, keep at least one hand on the rail.
- Don't jump. Lower yourself carefully from docks, trucks or work stages.
- Don't build or use makeshift ladders out of chairs, benches, or boxes.
- When climbing ladders, face the front and use both hands to climb.
- Don't overreach from a ladder.
- Make sure there's only one person on a ladder at a time, and never stand on the top of a stepladder.

Choose safety every day—even on weekends.

Just a Reminder...

We are fast approaching the November 3rd deadline for submitting your entry for the Annual Health and Safety Committee Award. We know that it has been a busy and challenging time, with budget issues, changes in staff, and a new contract with unresolved issues. The Agency Health and Safety Committee would like to take the time to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of the hard working Institutional H&S Committees. We know the committees have been resourceful and successful in resolving some of the many issues that have come before them based on reports received from the agency committee liaisons.

The Agency Committee has had some staffing changes also; we are asking that you please provide your submissions for the H&S Award to Buffy Andrews, the newly appointed Management Co-Chair, at ODRC, Bureau of Labor Relations, Central Office or Dave Justice, 390 Worthington Rd., Suite A, Westerville, OH 43082-8331.



Agency Health & Safety Committee Members

- Buffy Andrews (Management Co-Chair)
- Dave Justice (Bargaining Unit Co-Chair)
- Andrew Albright (Management)
- Dave Bailey (Bargaining Unit)
- Jody Burkhardt (Management)
- Bridgette Duncan (Bargaining Unit)
- Bob Hausen (Bargaining Unit)
- Ed Henderson (In Memoriam)
- Stuart Hudson (Management)
- Stephanie Lee (Bargaining Unit)
- Chris Mabe (Bargaining Unit)
- Bryant Palmer (Management)
- Kevin Runyon (Management)
- Danny Southward (Management)
- Charlie Williamson (Bargaining Unit)
- Chere Wilson (Bargaining Unit)



The Intranet for DRC employees has a health and safety website with various health and safety resources. Some items posted for review are approved outside agency web links, DRC Safety protocol and additional Safety and Health Coordinator Basic, Intermediate and Advanced training classes. You can access the Office of Prisons Safety and Health Program at:

<http://intra.drc.state.oh.us/web/OOP/safety.htm>