

## What is H1N1 (Swine) Flu?

- **H1N1 (Swine) flu is a new influenza virus causing illness in people.** It has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia, plus avian genes and human genes. Scientists call this a “quadruple reassortant” virus.
- **H1N1 (Swine) flu is contagious.** This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. The virus is spreading from person-to-person, in the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread.
- **H1N1 (Swine) flu is NOT caused by eating pork or pork products.** H1N1 flu is not a foodborne disease, it is a respiratory disease. The USDA continues to remind consumers that all meat and poultry products are safe to eat when properly prepared and cooked.
- **Illness with the new H1N1 (Swine) flu virus has ranged from mild to severe.** While the vast majority of people who have contracted H1N1 (Swine) flu have recovered without needing medical treatment, hospitalizations and deaths have occurred.
- **About 70 percent of people who have been hospitalized with H1N1 (Swine) flu have had one or more medical conditions that placed them in the “high risk” category** for serious seasonal flu-related complications. These include pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and kidney disease.
- **Unlike the seasonal flu virus, adults older than 64 do not yet appear to be at increased risk of H1N1 (Swine) flu-related complications.** CDC laboratory studies have shown that about one-third of adults older than 60 may have antibodies against this virus. It is unknown how much protection may be afforded against H1N1 (Swine) flu by an existing antibody.