

Swine Flu update from PTH 29.04.09

Swine flu is a respiratory disease caused by influenza type A (H1N1) virus infection, (Health Protection Agency (HPA), 2009) which infects pigs. It can be spread through coughing and sneezing.

At present the Government are not putting any restrictions on travelling. The health protection agency has given their advice in an algorithm for those people who may be infected with swine flu. Those who potentially have swine flu must fulfil the following criteria:

1. **CLINICAL** Fever $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ **OR** history of fever **AND** flu-like illness (two or more of the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, rhinorrhea, limb/joint pain, headache.) **OR** other severe/life-threatening illness suggestive of an infectious process.
2. **GEOGRAPHICAL** Onset of symptoms within **seven** days of visiting areas known to have incidents of probable human-to-human transmission of swine influenza A/H1N1:
 - Mexico
 - United States (California; New York; Texas)

If health care workers are in contact with infected patients they should follow the advice from the HPA, which is:

- Ensure you wear a facemask, plastic apron and gloves.
- Nose and throat swabs should be taken and put into viral media and sent to an appropriate HPA regional laboratory for analysis.
- Encourage patient to wear facemask.
- Nurse at home if possible (advise patient to self isolate until results of testing available; if in residential home, keep away from communal areas).
- Advise on respiratory and hand hygiene.
- Start antivirals - testing has shown that the human swine influenza H1N1 can be treated with the antiviral oseltamavir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®). Standard treatment dose of oseltamavir in adults (age >13 years old) is 75mg bd for 5 days. Standard treatment dose of zanamivir is 10mg bd for 5 days.
- If patient is too ill to be nursed at home, admit patient to hospital in a side room with strict respiratory isolation procedures in place.
 - Healthcare staff to wear full personal protective equipment (PPE) - correctly fitted high filtration mask, gown, gloves and eye protection (same procedures as for avian flu).
 - Keep number of staff caring for the patient to a minimum

Treatment for this condition once confirmed would require the use of antivirals, namely oseltamavir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza). The HPA states that most of the previously reported swine influenza cases recovered fully from the disease without requiring medical attention and without antiviral medicines.

The HPA strongly advises that if you suspect that you have Swine flu to contact your doctor by telephone, DO NOT go into the surgery and stay at home to minimise spread.

For further information including the HPA algorithm please go to the following websites:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1240732817665?p=1240732817665>

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>

<http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/advice/disease-prevention/swine-influenza.aspx>