

H3N2v (Variant Influenza A Virus)

fact sheet



H3N2v is a type of influenza (flu) virus that normally circulates in pigs, but can infect humans. Currently, H3N2v resembles the seasonal flu. However, the seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against H3N2v.

Symptoms and Care

Symptoms of H3N2v infection are similar to the seasonal flu. Symptoms can include fever, cough, runny nose, and possibly other symptoms like body aches, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

The same medications used to treat seasonal flu can treat H3N2v in children and adults. The currently recommended drugs – Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and Zanamivir (Relenza) – are available by prescription from your doctor. Early treatment works better and may be especially important for people with a high risk medical condition. If you are prescribed these drugs by your doctor, you should finish all doses of the medication, according to your doctor's instructions.

Transmission

Most of the people who become infected with H3N2v have been in contact with pigs at agricultural fairs. The virus is thought to spread from infected pigs to humans in the same way that seasonal flu viruses spread between people. H3N2v spreads when you breathe in the virus after an infected pig coughs or sneezes in the air. You might get infected by touching something with the virus on it and then touching your own mouth, nose or eyes. In some cases, the H3N2v virus seems to have spread from person-to-person. So far spread has not continued beyond one or two people.

Risk

Certain people are at higher risk for serious flu complications if they get infected with influenza viruses, including H3N2v. This includes children younger than 5 years, people 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain long-term health conditions (like asthma and other chronic conditions such as lung disease, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems, and neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions). These people should avoid pigs and swine barns when attending agricultural fairs.

*Case History**

There were 12 human infections in the United States with H3N2v in 2011; most were associated with exposure to pigs. In 2012, 309 cases of H3N2v infection across 12 states were detected. Reports of H3N2v infections in 2013 began in June in the state of Indiana and have spread to several other states. There have been no cases of H3N2v in Oklahoma. There has been one death in the United States associated with H2N2v since 2010.

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Prevention

The Tulsa Health Department recommends these tips to help protect against H3N2v:

- Don't take food or drink into pig areas; don't eat, drink or put anything in your mouth while in pig areas.
- Don't take toys, pacifiers, cups, baby bottles, strollers, or similar items into pig areas.
- Wash your hands often with soap and running water before and after exposure to pigs.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Allow your hands to air dry or dry with a paper towel. Do not dry your hands by wiping them on your clothing.
- Avoid close contact with pigs that look or act ill.
- If you must come in contact with pigs that are known or suspected to be sick, you can minimize your exposure by wearing personal protective equipment like protective clothing, gloves and masks that cover your mouth and nose.
- To further reduce the risk of infection, minimize contact with pigs in the pig barn and arenas.
- Watch your pig (if you have one) for signs of illness and call a veterinarian if you suspect it might be sick.
- Avoid contact with pigs if you have flu-like symptoms. Wait 7 days after your illness started or until you have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer. If you must have contact with pigs while you are sick, take the protective actions listed above.

It does not appear to be possible for someone to become infected with H3N2v by eating properly handled and prepared pork or other products from pigs.

Recommendations for Health Care Providers

Healthcare providers should consider H3N2v in patients with Influenza like Illness (ILI) who report direct contact with swine or attended a swine exhibit.

For the most current information and case counts please visit:*

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/h3n2v-cases.htm>

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