

## Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

### What is influenza?

Influenza is a virus which causes cough or sore throat accompanied by a fever. This virus is spread from person-to-person through saliva and mucus droplets often formed when coughing or sneezing. These droplets can also contaminate surfaces frequently touched, such as doorknobs, doors, and countertops. Sharing items like mobile and laptops can also spread the virus.

### Why influenza virus is sometimes called “swine flu”?

This virus was originally referred to as “swine flu” because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in the virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs (swine). The influenza viruses circulating are very much human flu now.

### How does influenza spread?

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing, sneezing or talking by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something – such as a surface or object – with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

### What are the signs and symptoms of this virus in people?

The symptoms of flu in people include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. People may be infected with the flu, including influenza A/H1N1 and influenza B, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

Young children are also at high risk of serious complications from influenza. People 65 and older are also at “high risk” of developing serious complications from their illness.

### Who is at higher risk from serious influenza related complications?

Most people who get the flu will have mild illness, will not need medical care or antiviral drugs, and will recover in less than two weeks. Some people, however, are more likely to get flu complications that result in being hospitalized and occasionally result in death.

People at High Risk for Developing Flu -Related Complications:

- Pregnant women
- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old

- Adults 65 years of age and older
- People with chronic medical conditions like Asthma, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease, liver disease, kidney disease & blood disorder etc.

### How long can an infected person spread this virus to others?

People infected with flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. This “infectious period” can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems.

### What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?



Everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like the flu:

When you sneeze or cough, cover your nose and mouth with either your elbow or your shoulder (aim for the cloth of your shirt)

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, **stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone** except to get medical care or for other necessities. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.

### What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

Keep away from others as much as possible. When you sneeze or cough, cover your nose and mouth with either your elbow or your shoulder (aim for the cloth of your shirt)

Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.



### Is medicine available for Swine flu?

Yes, specific drug named Oseltamivir is available for treatment of swine flu. It should be used under medical supervision.

### **Where are the facilities available for treatment of swine flu?**

For treatment of this disease, facility is available at medical colleges of Cuttack, Berhampur, Burla, Capital hospital, Bhubaneswar and few private hospitals. Facility to isolate & screen suspected cases is also available in all district head quarter hospitals. Throat swab samples can also be collected in those places.

### **Where we can get the medicine for swine flu?**

Oseltamavir is available in Cuttack, Berhampur, Burla Govt. medical college, Capital hospital, Bhubaneswar, Rourkela general hospital, all district head quarter hospital & few private hospitals. This drug is provided free of cost by Govt.

### **How we can confirm swine flu in laboratory?**

Swine flu is confirmed by testing of throat swab samples. These samples are collected only from admitted suspect cases in hospital. Samples are tested in Regional Medical Research Center (RMRC), Bhubaneswar.

### **Is it necessary to vaccinate against influenza?**

Vaccination against influenza is advised for health staff working in close proximity of cases of influenza. Besides this it can be advised for elderly above the age 65 years and persons having asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease, diabetes, liver disease, blood disorder, cancer and kidney disease etc during intense transmission.