

Mexican (Swine) Flu Update



Mexican flu is a type of virus of the same variety as our typical seasonal influenza.

The problem with Mexican flu is that this is a relatively new strain (H1N1) of influenza virus to which most people have little or no immunity.

Although the original host seems to have been the pig the virus has evolved so that it can now spread rapidly from person to person.

The virus can be spread by coughing or sneezing and it can survive for several hours on surfaces that have been contaminated.

Currently there have been relatively few confirmed cases of Mexican flu in the UK and these people seem to have experienced only fairly mild symptoms. So far people at risk seem to be those that have recently travelled to the source of the infection in Mexico or certain states in the USA or people who have been in contact with known cases. **If you have travelled to the USA or Mexico in the last 7 days and have now developed flu-like symptoms we would ask that you contact the surgery by phone for advice to reduce the risk of spreading the infection.**

It is currently unclear how many people might be affected by Mexican flu but there is an organized approach to limiting the spread of the virus and dealing with the situation in the event of a widespread outbreak.

Should a more widespread outbreak occur local systems and a national helpline will be put in place to deal with all enquiries and upto date information will be made available as the situation develops.

Dealing with Pandemic Flu



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- **P**revent. Preventing the spread of the virus is key to reducing the impact of a pandemic. Washing your hands regularly, throwing away used tissues and cleaning surfaces regularly will help to reduce the spread of the virus. To prevent the spread of infection we would ask that if you develop flu-like symptoms you **do not attend the surgery** but rather call the national flu helpline for more information
- **O**seltamivir (Tamiflu). Treatment with the antiviral medicine Tamiflu within the first 48hrs of illness should help limit the effects of the virus. Tamiflu will only be made available through the national flu helpline for collection at allocated depot points
- **R**eview. Most people will be able to manage there symptoms at home without the need for medical assistance but children <1yr, the elderly, frail and those with chronic disease may need to be assessed at home by a health professional.
- **K**nowledge. There will be regular news bulletins as the situation develops and guidance may change so it is important to keep up to date. For further information you can access the links below.

Useful links

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/DH_081652

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

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