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**What is swine flu?**

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. Outbreaks of swine flu happen regularly in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Most commonly, human cases of swine flu happen in people who are around pigs but it's possible for swine flu viruses to spread from person to person also.

**What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?**

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

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

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, DHSS recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

**What is the City of St. Louis Department of Health Doing?**

DOH is working with CDC and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to investigate and understand what is happening with the swine flu outbreak, learn more about how it is transmitted and determine how it can be prevented and controlled.

DOH is coordinating within the region to assure that all local health agencies are unified in our approach to surveillance and prevention and control of the disease. DOH will coordinate disease investigation across city, county and state lines.