



Food Safety and the novel H1N1 Virus

Q: Do any swine have the virus that has infected humans?

A: There is no evidence, at this time, that swine in the United States are infected with this strain.

Q: Can I get this new strain of virus from eating pork or pork products?

A: According to USDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, no. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food so you cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit kills all viruses.



The USDA suggests, as it has in the past, cooking pork and pork products to the proper internal temperature and preventing cross-contamination between raw and cooked food is the key to safety. You should:

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw pork;
- Prevent cross-contamination by keeping raw pork away from other foods;
- After cutting raw meat, wash cutting board, knife, and countertops with hot, soapy water;
- Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of 1 tablespoon chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water; and
- Use a good thermometer to ensure pork has reached the safe internal temperature of at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit to kill food-borne germs that might be present.

Q: Can I get this flu by touching pork that is not yet cooked?

A: There is no evidence at this time that the virus is in swine or that touching uncooked pork could infect someone with the virus.

Q: How will the public be notified if the government finds that people should not eat pork?

A: Delivering factual, timely information is a priority for USDA. Should there be a detection of influenza in a U.S. swine herd, those results would be shared with the public in a timely manner.

Q: Is USDA testing and monitoring to make sure swine are not infected with the virus and if so, how?

A: A network of Federal veterinarians, state animal health officials and private practitioners are regularly involved with monitoring U.S. swine for signs of significant disease. To date, there have been no reports that the influenza virus currently causing illness in humans is circulating anywhere in the U.S. swine herds. As a proactive measure, USDA is reaching out to all state animal health officials to affirm they have no signs of this virus type in their state. USDA has put U.S. pork producers on high alert for safety.

