

NEWS RELEASE



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For immediate use

TOP 10 SWINE FLU TIPS

Now that the flu season has arrived, it is not surprising this new swine flu is spreading so quickly. It is very important to take precautions with any influenza and Dr Deborah Mills, Australia's foremost travel medicine specialist, has devised a list of the 10 most important swine flu tips for this winter season.

1. **WASH YOUR HANDS / CARRY HAND SANITISER** Wash hands after using public amenities, after the toilet and especially before touching your face or eating. The influenza virus can survive two days on surfaces. A common way to catch the flu is by touching something which has been coughed or sneezed upon by an infected person, [eg., someone who used the shopping trolley before you may have the flu].
2. **CARRY TISSUES** Have tissues with you at all times. Cough or sneeze into tissues or hankies. If you get caught without them, cough into your elbow. Tissues are easy because they can be used once and thrown straight into the bin. Hankies are okay but after one use must be washed in hot water.
3. **COVER YOUR COUGH** If you are in public, and you are coughing you should wear a mask. **This will** stop the disease spreading. Masks are not very helpful at preventing influenza. Using a mask incorrectly may increase the risk of a well person catching the disease, rather than reduce it.
4. **PHONE YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU GET SICK** If you have sudden onset of a fever of over 38 degrees C, with cough, tiredness and lack of appetite then phone your doctor. If you also have difficulty breathing, phone your doctor urgently, or go to the nearest casualty department. It is not possible to test everyone for swine flu at the present time as the labs are overwhelmed. Do not arrive at your doctors without calling first.
5. **OBSERVE QUARANTINE RULES ; STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK** and keep children home if they are sick. Quarantine means staying home from work or school, avoiding public transport, the shops, the movies, the ekka, meeting friends at their house etc etc. This quarantine should last for 7 days if you have swine flu symptoms, and have not taken medication. For persons who have taken Tamiflu and are now without a fever, the recommended quarantine is for 3 days (6 doses of Tamiflu).
6. **GO HOME IMMEDIATELY IF YOU BECOME SICK.** The virus can spread even before you get symptoms but it spreads much more once you start coughing the virus into the environment. Quarantine yourself somewhere while you wait for transport. Surfaces you have coughed on should be cleaned.
7. **AVOID CROWDS if you have medical problems** . Persons with medical problems should not expose themselves to crowds eg go to the exhibition (ekka) as the virus will be spreading there and you are more likely to get severe disease if you get swine flu (or other flu)
8. **Only use antiviral drugs if prescribed by your doctor.** Beware of internet purchases of antivirals, it is easy to receive fake drugs, risk your health and waste your money.
9. **Have the regular influenza vaccine** – it wont stop swine flu, but will stop you looking like you have swine flu.
10. **Eat as much pork as you like!** You cannot catch swine flu from properly cooked pork. The human swine flu virus is not circulating in pigs.


"If people follow these 10 things during this flu season, they'll have a reduced risk of catching all influenza including swine flu suggested Dr Deb.

As a pioneer within the travel medicine field, Dr Deborah Mills of Dr Deb's – The Travel Doctor, has practiced in the area of travel medicine for 20 years. She is also the author of Australia's most popular medical travel book 'Travelling Well' which is in its 15th edition and has 140,000 copies in print.

For more great travel information and resources, visit www.drdeb.com.au.

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