



Swine Flu: Vaccine, Symptoms and Natural Flu Prevention

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Flu season is upon us, and to compound matters, there's this little pandemic called H1N1, or swine flu, which has many shaking in their winter boots.

Schools across the world are recommending that all students be vaccinated (over 75 children have died in the United States since the swine flu's emergence), and health care workers are being mandated to take the vaccine.

Although the Centers for Disease Control has the goal of producing between 195 and 250 million doses of H1N1 vaccine--primarily to [protect children, pregnant women and those with chronic health problems](#)--the rollout, which began early this month, has been slow and many hospitals, clinics and doctor's offices are overwhelmed by the sheer number of people clamoring for the shot. Some warn, if unchecked, H1N1 could rival the devastating flu pandemic of 1918.

The CDC will be distributing the vaccines to local health jurisdictions and doctor's offices instead of the usual route of coming directly from the manufacturers. It should be noted that the swine flu vaccine is not the same as the "regular" flu vaccine, which has been stockpiled in time for flu season. Mostly what differentiates the swine flu from the regular seasonal flu is fever coupled with nausea and gastrointestinal discomfort.

"Most of the things that look like the flu now are probably H1N1," explains Dr. Cheri Quincy, doctor of osteopathy and director of the Amitabha Medical Clinic in Northern California.

"The swine flu also has some nausea, vomiting and gastrointestinal symptoms that the regular flu doesn't usually have. Onset is sore throat, high temperature, the usual kinds of stuff. And in the beginning you usually can't tell."

Quincy, who is a strong advocate of preventive medicine and does not believe in vaccines across the board, says this vaccination is one that children should get.

"It's the safe thing to do," says Quincy. "I was sort of on the fence about [the vaccination], but I've got grandkids in north Texas, and there are kids dying there." For more on swine flu symptoms in children that may require emergency attention, go to [swine flu symptoms in children](#).



Dr. Cheri Quincy

"Obviously people have their issues and fears," Quincy acknowledges. "But the swine flu is the same flu variety that killed 50 million people in 1918. It's only missing one mutation to make it really virulent. This go round with the swine flu hasn't done that -- we're lucky. But it could change and it could change really fast and it's hard to play catch up with vaccines."

For those who may think they have the flu or swine flu symptoms, Quincy notes that the best thing to do is to stay home (as it is highly contagious and can live on doorknobs for up to 12 hours) and stay rested for several days afterward.

"Just like other flus, people are contagious from about 24 hours until they show symptoms until about two to three days after they have symptoms," says Quincy. "And then they need to take another two to three days to recover so that they don't get secondary infections like pneumonia which is always a risk after the flu particularly for older people."

In terms of natural prevention, Quincy prescribes the following:

- **Don't forget the basics.** Maintain good hygiene: Wash your hands frequently, stay hydrated, eat as much nutrient-rich natural food as possible, avoid sugar and get adequate sleep to boost your immunity.
- **Consider taking nutritional supplements.** Vitamin D and zinc help support the immune system, and the extracts lomatium and elderberry have been shown to have antiviral activity. Medicinal mushroom dietary supplements are also very effective for immune support.
- **Make sure your home is well ventilated.** Despite conventional wisdom, indoor air can actually be more polluted than outdoor air. Keep the air circulating through your home and office by keeping windows open, and avoid stuffy environments.
- **Prevent the spread of flu.** Swine flu is highly contagious. If you contract the flu, you are contagious from the day before symptoms show until three to four days after symptoms disappear. Stay home from work or school during this time. Prevent secondary infections by staying home or in bed for another few days, or until your energy returns.

For more information about preventing and treating the flu, Quincy recommends '[Natural Solutions to Sail You Through Cold and Flu Season](#),' a free health report that provides information about natural ways to prepare for flu season. The report is available for download by visiting www.dreliaz.org.