



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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## NEWS

### **Fair Season Requires Precautions When Visiting Animal Exhibits**

Hamilton County, OH.....Local, County and State Fairs are fun places to eat, ride and visit livestock and agricultural exhibits. They can also be places to pick up unwanted infections caused by influenza viruses.

While rare, human infections with influenza viruses that normally circulate in swine have occurred. Most commonly, human influenza infections of this type occur in people with direct exposure to infected pigs (e.g. children near pigs at a fair or workers in the swine industry). This is thought to happen mainly when an infected pig coughs or sneezes and droplets with influenza virus in them spread through the air. If these droplets land in your nose or mouth, or are inhaled, you can be infected. There also is some evidence that you might get infected by touching something that has virus on it and then touching your own mouth or nose. A third way to possibly get infected is to inhale dust containing influenza virus. Scientists aren't really sure which of these ways of spread is the most common. Swine influenza has not been shown to be transmissible to people through eating properly handled and prepared pork or other products derived from pigs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following precautions for those attending and working at fairs:

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- Anyone who is at increased risk for serious flu complications planning to attend a fair where pigs will be present should avoid pigs and swine barns at the fair.
- People who are at increased risk of serious flu complications include children younger than five, people 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain long-term health conditions (like asthma and other lung disease, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems, and neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions).
- Don't take food or drink into pig areas. Don't eat, drink or put anything in your mouth in pig areas.
- Don't take toys, pacifiers, cups, baby bottles, strollers, or similar items into pig areas.
- Avoid close contact with pigs that look or act ill.
- Take protective measures if you must come in contact with pigs that are known or suspected to be sick. This includes minimizing contact with pigs and wearing personal protective equipment like protective clothing, gloves and masks that cover your mouth and nose when contact is required.
- Wash your hands often with soap and running water before and after exposure to pigs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- To further reduce the risk of infection, minimize contact with pigs and swine barns.
- Watch your pig (if you have one) for illness. Call a veterinarian if you suspect illness.
- Avoid contact with pigs if you have flu-like symptoms. Wait seven days after your illness started or until you have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer. If you must have contact with pigs while you are sick, take the protective actions listed above.

People at increased risk for serious illness who have pig exposure, including having attended a fair where pigs are present, and develop flu symptoms, should call a health

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care provider. Tell them about your exposure and your increased risk for serious illness. Seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against the specific virus implicated in swine influenza cases (H3N2v), but prescription influenza antiviral drugs can treat H3N2v illness in people.

*Hamilton County Public Health works to assure the 460,000 citizens living outside the cities of Cincinnati, Norwood, Sharonville and Springdale are safe from disease, injury and contamination.*

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