

H3N2v (variant) Influenza and Swine Contact

What is H3N2v (variant) flu?

H3N2v is a type of swine influenza (flu) virus that was first detected in people in the United States in July 2011. Infections with H3N2v have mostly been associated with prolonged exposure to pigs at agricultural fairs. Limited human-to-human spread of this virus has been detected in the past, but there has been no sustained or community spread. It's possible that sporadic infections and even localized outbreaks among people with this virus will continue to occur.

What do the letters and numbers mean?

H3N2v is just one of many types of flu, and the letters and numbers serve to distinguish different flu viruses. A "v" or "variant" designation is applied when a virus that normally circulates in pigs is found in humans.

How is the H3N2v flu transmitted to people?

H3N2v appears to be spread by direct or indirect contact with pigs infected with the virus. Person to person spread has not been seen, but it is possible. People can also transmit H3N2v back to pigs.

How did the H3N2 "variant" come into being?

The specific origin of the H3N2v flu virus is unknown at this time. The genetic code of flu viruses do change often, which is why a new seasonal flu vaccine is needed each year. A genetic variation most probably occurred with the H3N2 virus that has allowed it to spread from pigs to people.

What are the signs and symptoms of H3N2v flu in humans?

The symptoms of the H3N2v flu infection in people are similar to those for seasonal flu. Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Occasionally people report nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. It is expected that most people will recover without needing medical care.

If I go to a state or county fair, will I get infected?

No. H3N2v infections have been found in only a few

fairs, and even then, only a few people became infected through the direct or indirect contact with infected pigs. Infection depends on a number of factors such as your natural immunity and health and the ability of the infected pig to spread the virus.

If I go to a fair with my family, what precautions can I take to protect my family?

- Wash hands frequently with soap and running water before and after exposure to animals.
- Never eat, drink or put things in your mouth while in animal areas and don't take food or drink into animal areas. If you have animals – including pigs – watch them for signs of illness and call a veterinarian if you suspect they might be sick.
- Avoid contact with animals that look or act ill, when possible.
- Avoid contact with pigs if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms.
- If you must come in contact with pigs while you are sick, or if you must come in contact with pigs known or suspected to be infected, or their environment, you should use appropriate protective measures (for example, wear protective clothing, gloves, masks that cover your mouth and nose, and other personal protective equipment) and practice good respiratory and hand hygiene.

Can I get infected with H3N2v virus from eating or preparing pork?

No. You cannot get H3N2v flu from eating pork or pork products because this virus is not transmitted through food.

Is H3N2v different from the seasonal flu that occurs every fall and winter? Will that flu vaccine protect me?

Yes, this H3N2v is different from the seasonal flu people get. And no, the seasonal flu vaccine does not protect against the H3N2v.

Additional Information:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [Minnesota Department of Health](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

This fact sheet is meant to provide basic information. For specific health concerns please contact your physician or veterinarian. Updated April 2015