

## **GET READY FOR FLU SEASON... SWINE FLU SEASON, TOO.**



We hear about it in so many different tones: Is it here? Is the vaccination ready? Is there still time? Does it even matter?

### **Avoiding Sickness Always Matters.**

More so to any senior, so the answer to the last question is the obvious: "Of course it does." This kind of common sense can be applied to many of the other questions surrounding the H1N1 virus, or as it is commonly called, "swine flu."

### **What Is It?**

Swine flu does indeed come from pigs. Pigs can become infected with both avian and human virus, and when that happens the simple yet effective building blocks of virus can swap around with each other. Scientists call this effect "reorganization," and the result is a new virus type. The H1N1 virus can be especially dangerous for young children, pregnant mothers, and seniors.

### **How Should We Avoid It?**

How should one avoid getting sick with a cold or flu? H1N1 is, after all, a flu virus. The best advice is **wash your hands for a full twenty seconds**, and do so often throughout your day. Be aware of what you touch in public areas and you'll find yourself being compulsive about it, though you don't need to be. Just wash often, and always before meals, or before handling food, just as your mother told you. As with any other cold or flu, remember: It is very important to cover your mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze, and stay away from risks like overexertion, under-eating, and chills, as you normally would. Carrying small bottles of **hand-sanitizers** can be of great help-your hands won't get chapped, and some brands smell good, while some have no odor at all.



If you're looking after someone in your life who is living alone, be sure they are running their heater at night when appropriate, as well as the air conditioning in hot weather. Be sure they are eating regular meals, like you always do, and that they are generally practicing good hygiene and housekeeping. It seems so simple, yet these daily factors of living are important protections against disease.

For more information visit [www.flu.org](http://www.flu.org).