

Swine Flu pandemic wallops Oregon

JENNIFER SITTON

Symptoms

- Exhaustion
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Loss of appetite
- Aching muscles
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Chills
- Fatigue

Prevention

- Vaccination or FluMist
- Avoid sick people
- Get a lot of sleep
- Sanitize regularly
- Hydration
- Boost immune system
- Visit doctor when ill
- Take vitamins

Vaccination available to...

- Anyone under 24 years old
- Anyone immune compromised
- Anyone with respiratory illness
- Anyone working with children

While many teenagers joke about their sick friends having swine flu, H1N1 is no laughing matter. Soon, H1N1, called swine flu because it was originally found in pigs, might not only be a worry for those involved in the healthcare

home for 24 hours after their symptoms are gone without the use of medication because we don't want you spreading it," Ellwood said. Although schools cannot force ill students to stay at home, it is strongly suggested they stay away until symptoms have been gone for 24 hours. The

students or staff are out sick, it is possible that schools will close. These closures would be on a school to school basis and the closure would be a joint decision of the Clackamas County Health Department and the school's superintendent, according to Ellwood.

The H1N1 vaccine will come out toward the end of October in short supply. At first, it will only be available for anyone up to 24 years old, healthcare workers, anyone who lives or works with kids under six months of age and anyone immune compromised or with respiratory illness. According to Ellwood, the district has the idea of implementing flu clinics at schools.

For the past two years, the OCSH has had flu clinics at their schools and the program has been very successful, according to Previs. If the

school district approves the plan to offer H1N1 vaccination clinics during school hours, the vaccination will be paid for by the government and parental consent will be necessary.

The best way to avoid the swine flu or any flu is to practice good hygiene such as frequent, thorough hand washing. The district website says that for the washing to be effective, sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. Also, to protect everyone, if a person is exhibiting symptoms of H1N1, STAY HOME! It is better to miss a few days of school than to expose all students and staff to the virus, according to Ellwood.

While the idea of an H1N1 Pandemic may be frightening, with the proper procedures in place, frequent hand washing and knowledge of the symptoms, a true crisis may be averted.

"Given that we are in a pandemic, we need to expect that we will see cases. There is not a single community that hasn't been affected."

—Marilyn Ellwood, District Nurse

industry. In June of 2009, enough cases of H1N1 were confirmed worldwide for the disease to officially be raised to the level of pandemic.

"This is the first year in Oregon history where the flu season never ended. It continued on through the summer and was transferred through students attending summer camps," Linda Previs, Oregon City District Registered Nurse, said. Even in West Linn High School, more students seem to be out with the flu than is normal for this time of year.

"Given that we are in a pandemic, we need to expect that we will see cases," Marilyn Ellwood, District Nurse, said. "There is not a single community that hasn't been affected." While numbers are still low, cases have been confirmed at West Linn as well as in all the surrounding areas and districts. "If you have the flu, there's a good chance that you have the H1N1 (swine flu)," Previs said. This is because it is the most prevalent flu in our community, and because we have no immunity to it a larger percent of the population will be sick.

So how do you know if you have the swine flu? H1N1 acts the same as the regular flu, but comes on very quickly, in as little as a few hours. So far, it has affected mostly young people up to age 24; another thing that makes it unusual. Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough, runny nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. However, the most telling signs include having a fever over 100 degrees, body aches and fatigue.

The flu generally lasts five to ten days. Anti-viral drugs, such as Tamiflu can shorten the severity and length of the illness if it is caught early enough. Those who contract the virus are contagious one day before symptoms are present and up to seven days after they have passed. H1N1 is spread through coughing and sneezing.

"We want people to stay

district is also asking that parents inform the school of any symptoms or test results of their student when they call in their illness related absence.

If a large portion of

Little Ms. Piggy

Student with swine flu tells her story

LIBBY KARA

I woke up on the morning of Monday Oct. 5 feeling worse than I had felt in a long time. I was freezing, my throat was sore, my head felt like it was going to burst open and every muscle in my body ached. I had been debating on whether or not I should go to school and it didn't take long to decide not to.

I texted my mother and told her that, "I was experiencing flu-like symptoms." She called the doctor right away and I had an appointment two hours later. "Oh, and by the way," she said "the doctor told me that you're going to have to go through the back door because if you do have Swine Flu, they don't want to spread it to anyone else."

By this time I was feeling terrible and didn't want to be treated like a leper, but I did as I was told. I was unaware of how contagious this "Swine Flu" really is.

I drove myself to the doctor and walked up the back stairs only to find myself in a strange part of the doctor's office. A woman greeted me and hurried me into a room where I was to sit until someone could help me. A nurse came in about five minutes later, with what looked like a q-tip that was about 5 inches long. Expecting her to swab my throat, I opened my mouth and said "AHH" but she told me to close my mouth and proceeded to stick that five inch long q-tip up my nose. I swear she touched my brain.

I was then given a regular check-up to make sure I was otherwise healthy, which I obviously was not. My doctor left the room to check my

Swine Flu test and no less than 30 seconds later she returned telling me that I did in fact have Swine Flu and that I should stay away from pregnant women and from children. Then she wrote my prescription and sent me on my way. This all caught me slightly off-guard, but I expected it.

him and he sprayed hand sanitizer all over me.

This went on for about an hour until he went home and I was left confused because I didn't realize why everyone was deathly afraid of contracting Swine Flu, when in reality it really wasn't that bad. I felt pretty sick for a few days, but I have definitely

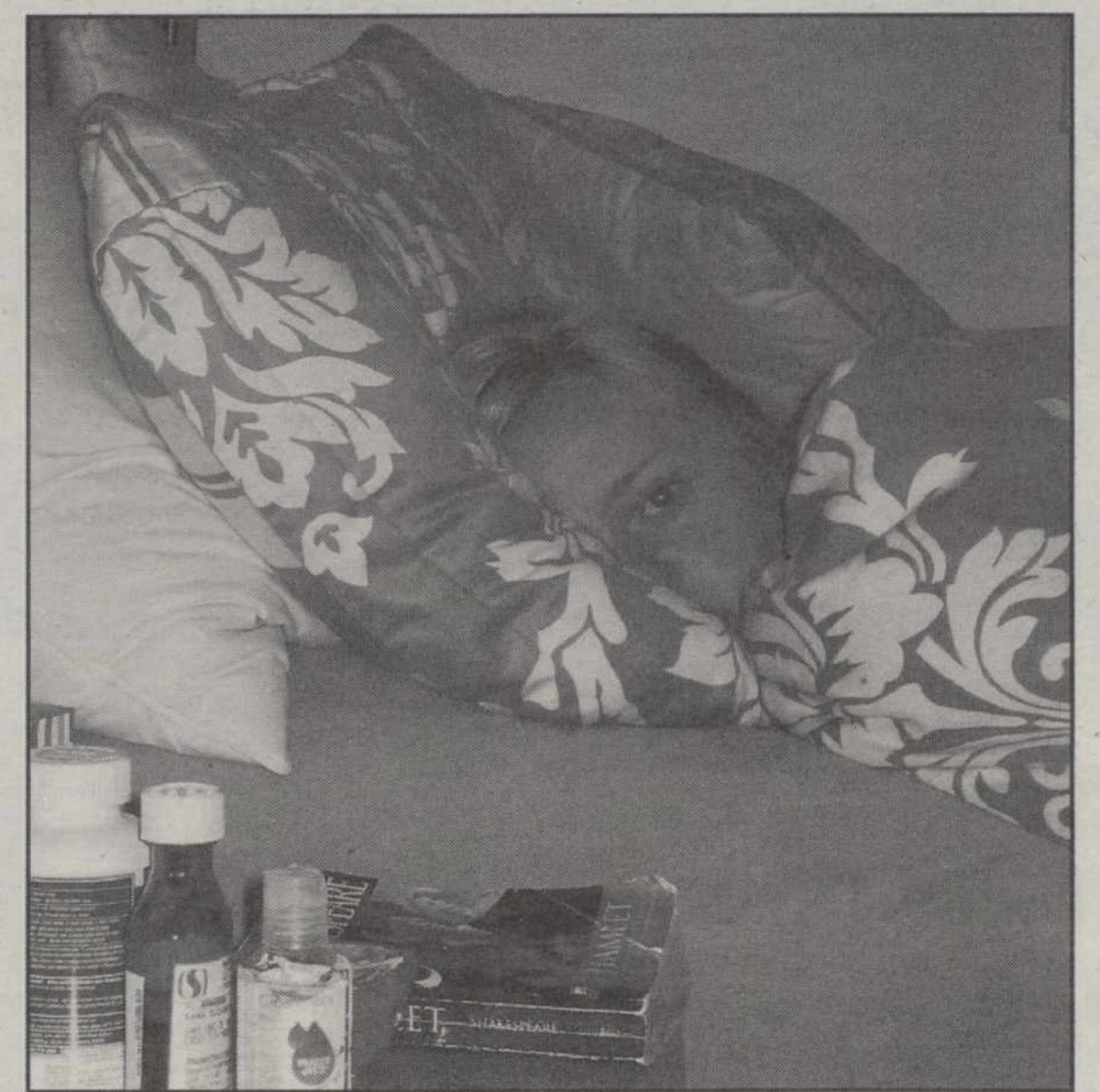


Photo by Libby Kara

Libby Kara, senior, recovers from swine flu at home. Cases of H1N1, an extremely contagious strain of the flu have appeared throughout the Portland-Metro area, therefore elevating the swine flu frenzy to the level of pandemic.

Over the next couple of days I laid in bed drinking tea and eating soup. Every time the Advil kicked in I'd be sweating and once it wore off I was freezing. On Wednesday I had my first visitor, but it didn't go exactly as I had planned. My boyfriend, Max, came over after school was out and told me that we could only talk if we were both outside and 6 feet apart at all times. I thought it was a joke at first until I went to greet

been much sicker before.

The actual symptoms lasted for about four days, the first two days being the worst, I was freezing, my back hurt and I had a killer headache. The third day I just had a backache and a head cold and the last day I had a minor head cold. Being the invincible person that I am, I thought I was immune to this so-called "Swine Flu" and so I was not cautious at all. I definitely learned my lesson.