SWINE FLU AND ITS PREVENTION

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INTRODUCTION:-

Swine influenza is an infection caused by any one of several types of swine influenza viruses. Swine influenza virus (SIV) or swine-origin influenza virus (S-OIV) is any strain of the influenza family of viruses that is endemic in pigs. As of 2009, the known SIV strains include influenza C and the subtypes of influenza A known as H1N1, H1N2, H2N1, H3N1, H3N2, and H2N3.

The Swine flu was initially seen in humans in Mexico in 2009, where the strain of the particular virus was a mixture from 3 types of strains. Six of the genes are very similar to the H1N2 influenza virus that was found in pigs around 2000.

Swine influenza virus is common throughout pig populations worldwide. Transmission of the virus from pigs to humans is not common and does not always lead to human flu, often resulting only in the production of antibodies in the blood. If transmission does cause human flu, it is called zoonotic swine flu. People with regular exposure to pigs are at increased risk of swine flu infection.

DEFINITION:-

“Swine flu (swine influenza) is defined as respiratory disease caused by viruses (influenza viruses) that infect the respiratory tract of pigs, resulting in nasal secretions, a barking cough, decreased appetite, and listless behavior. Swine flu produces most of the same symptoms in pigs as human flu produces in people.”

CAUSES OF SWINE FLU:-

There are only a few causes of swine flu in humans. They are:

- **Contact with infected pigs**: This is the most common way of catching swine flu. Any contact with infected pigs makes transmission more likely.

- **Contact with infected humans**: This is a much less common way of catching swine flu, but is a risk, especially for those in close contact with an infected person.
In cases where humans have infected other humans, close contact was necessary with the infected person, and it nearly always occurred in closed groups of people.

**RISK FACTORS OF SWINE FLU:-**

Some people are more at risk of catching swine flu than others; including:

- people aged over 65 years
- pregnant women
- teenagers receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- anyone with a compromised immune system
- children under 5 years
- people with chronic diseases

**SIGN AND SYMPTOMS:-**

The signs and symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of infections caused by other flu strains and can include:

- Fever (but not always)
- Chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Watery, red eyes
- Body aches
- Nausea and vomiting
TREATMENT OF SWINE FLU:

There are some drugs available that can effectively treat swine flu.

The two main treatments are adamantanes, including amantadine and rimantadine, and medications that inhibit the influenza neuraminidase protein, such as oseltamivir and zanamivir.

COMPLICATIONS OF SWINE FLU:

Influenza complications include:

- Neurological signs and symptoms, ranging from confusion to seizures
- Respiratory failure
- Worsening of chronic conditions, such as heart disease and asthma
- Pneumonia

PREVENTION OF SWINE FLU:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends annual flu vaccination for everyone age 6 months or older. Flu vaccines for 2018-19 protect against the viruses that cause swine flu and one or two other viruses that are expected to be the most common during flu season.
- The vaccine is available as an injection or a nasal spray. The nasal spray is approved for use in healthy people 2 through 49 years of age who are not pregnant. The nasal spray isn't recommended for some groups, such as pregnant women, children between 2 and 4 years old with asthma or wheezing, and people who have compromised immune systems.
- ISOLATED PRECAUTION:
VACCINE FOR SWINE FLU:-

Vaccines have been developed to protect against the virus that causes swine flu. There are two different brands of vaccine – Pandemrix and Celvapan. Many people given the Pandemrix vaccine will only need one dose. People who have the Celvapan vaccine will need two doses three weeks apart.

Who will get the vaccination first?

The vaccine is being offered first to people who are most likely to become seriously ill if they catch swine flu. These people are in the following priority groups:

1. Adults and children over six months of age who have a long-term health condition, including:
   - Chronic lung disease
   - Chronic heart disease
   - Chronic kidney disease
   - Chronic liver disease
   - Chronic neurological diseases
   - Diabetes mellitus
   - Immunosuppressant caused by a disease or treatment for a disease. For example, this may include people who do not have a spleen, and people who are on immunosuppressant treatment or are taking high doses of systemic steroids.
   - Pregnant women at any stage

2. Pregnancy
   Being pregnant can put you more at risk of being seriously ill if you catch swine flu. So far, evidence suggests that pregnant women are four 6 times more likely to develop serious complications from swine flu and up to five times more likely to need to go to hospital. The risks of flu are highest at the later stages of pregnancy.

3. People who live in the same house as someone whose immune system is compromised by disease or treatment
   If you live with someone who is having treatment for cancer, for example, and you catch swine flu, they might catch it from you and become very ill.
   If you have a severely compromised immune system, ask the people you live with to think about getting vaccinated to help protect you against catching swine flu. If you are unsure about whether you should be vaccinated, speak to your GP or practice nurse.
HOME REMEDIES FOR SWINE FLU:-

As there is no known single cure, steps can be taken at home to prevent swine flu and reduce symptoms if a person does contract the virus.

These include:

- washing hands regularly with soap
- getting plenty of sleep
- exercising often
- managing stress
- drinking liquids
- eating a balanced diet

- refraining from touching surfaces that may have the virus

Do not get close to people who are sick. Be sure to stay away from crowds if there is a swine flu outbreak in your area.

HOW TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INFECTION?

If a person is infected, it is important they follow these rules to prevent any further spread:

- Limit contact with other people.
- Put used tissues in a trash can.
- Wash the hands and face regularly.
- Keep all surfaces that are touched clean.
- Follow all doctors’ instructions.
- Do not go to work or school.
- When coughing or sneezing cover the mouth with a tissue. If there is no tissue available, cover the mouth and nose.

REFERENCE:-