



ONTARIO PORK

H1N1 - Pigs, Pork and People

Why the 2009 H1N1 Virus was Misnamed

This virus was originally referred to as "swine flu" because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs (swine) in North America. After some study, though, the virus turned out to be quite different having genes from pig, bird and human flu viruses. In the past, the naming of a virus by associating it with one animal species or another, has caused both anxiety and fear about food and in this particular instance, about pork. To avoid these misconceptions, scientific experts are more accurately calling this outbreak pandemic H1N1 virus.



Staying Healthy

The best practices to follow everyday to keep food safe and minimize the risk of contracting a virus or foodborne illness include:

- **Clean**—wash hands and surfaces often where germs reside;
- **Chill**—refrigerate or freeze foods promptly;
- **Separate**—keep raw meat/poultry/seafood and their juices separate from one another and other foods;
- **Cook**—cook foods to proper temperatures—160°F/71°C for pork.

Separating Fact from Fiction

It is not possible to get H1N1 from eating pork. The H1N1 virus lives and is entirely contained in the lung of a pig. It never goes into the blood or muscle of the pig, so pork is perfectly safe.

Sick pigs never enter the human food chain because of strict food and safety protocols. Veterinarian inspectors would identify them before they would get to market.

The virus is not transmitted by eating pork. Just like the seasonal flu, the virus can be spread from person to person if someone infected with H1N1 coughs or sneezes. People may become infected by inhaling droplets which carry the virus, or touching a surface with flu virus on it and then touching their nose, mouth or eyes.

