



# FEDERATION OF AMERICAN CONSUMERS AND TRAVELERS

## - NEWS RELEASE -

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **What You Should Do and Know About the Flu**

EDWARDSVILLE, IL, May 4, 2009 - With all the publicity about so-called “swine” flu, one of the best things anyone can do is be armed with the facts.

The Federation of American Consumers and Travelers (FACT) has compiled information from a variety of sources in order to help its members, and the public at large, to know (1) precisely what they are facing and (2) what they should do about it

#### ***First, some statistics:***

In the U.S., an estimated 25–50 million cases of the flu are reported each year — leading to 150,000 hospitalizations and 30,000–40,000 deaths yearly. Worldwide, it is estimated that there are some 1 billion cases of flu annually, resulting in at least 300,000 deaths.

#### ***So why all the publicity about “swine” flu?***

Swine flu (technically H1N1) is a new strain of flu. U.S. cases must be monitored for two weeks or so before health officials will get a true idea of the severity of the illness. At this time, it's suspected that H1N1 is a relatively mild form of the flu, but officials are choosing to err on the side of caution.

#### ***What can and should you do?***

- Avoid unnecessary contact with people or surfaces.
- When you cough or sneeze, do so into a tissue and then throw the tissue away.
- Wash your hands with soap and running water. (Thoroughly distribute the soapy water over hands and fingers, and scrub for at least 15 seconds.)

If you or someone in your household exhibits flu symptoms, stay home. Experts say people can be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms up to seven days after they get sick. Get plenty of rest, drink lots of fluids and eat nutritious foods.

Antivirals (oseltamivir, zanamivir, amantadine, rimantadine) can be effective if administered soon after flu onset, but are generally being administered to treat only the most severe cases. Check with your health care provider to determine what treatment plan might be best for you.

FACT is a not-for-profit association which was founded in 1984 and which provides a variety of benefits -- ranging from [medical insurance](#) and [dental care discounts](#) to [prescription drug savings](#) and [timely consumer information](#) -- for more than 1 million Americans nationwide.

Vicki Rolens, managing director of FACT, says: “Consumers need and want some basic information about matters relating to their health. Issues such “swine flu” can create a lot of anxiety, especially with continual coverage through so many media outlets. We certainly believe that the public should

exercise caution, but we also believe that a few simple facts can help to put things in perspective and can aid people in taking a calm, reasoned approach in the face of threatened ‘pandemics’.”

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Questions may be directed to FACT by sending an e-mail to [cservice@usafact.org](mailto:cservice@usafact.org). More information on the Federation of American Consumers and Travelers may be found in the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, and by visiting the association's web site ([www.usafact.org](http://www.usafact.org)). [The organization was formed](#) under the not-for-profit corporation laws of the District of Columbia in 1984. FACT does not dispense medical advice, but recommends that all persons contact their own health care provider for advice concerning the prevention and cure of medical issues. FACT’s administrative office is located at 318 Hillsboro Avenue, Edwardsville, IL 62025.