

H1N1 AND YOUR PET

Since April of this year, the H1N1 virus, often called the Swine Flu has swept the nation. It is highly contagious and clinical signs mimic those of our Seasonal Flu; fevers, cough, lethargy and with the same potential serious complications of pneumonia and death.

Both are spread through person-to-person contact... or contact with infected surfaces. The virus can persist on countertops and other surfaces from 3-8 hrs, but is easily killed by soap, chlorine and most household disinfectants.

The most effective prevention for both flu-types is to wash your hands with normal soap and water frequently and to avoid going to work or school if you are feeling ill.

While there has been no documentation of the spread of this disease from animals (even pigs) to humans, there have been 3-4 isolated instances that an infected human(s) has transmitted the disease to an animal (pig, ferret, cat). This has been a rare event so far.

People can keep their pets healthy by washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and minimizing contact with their pets while ill with influenza-like symptoms. If your pet exhibits signs of a respiratory illness, contact your veterinarian.