

What is the latest information about the H1N1 influenza virus in animals? On November 4, 2009 the Iowa Department of Public Health reported that a 13-year old pet cat had contracted the virus from its owners, who were also ill. Everyone in the household recovered completely. This was the first report of H1N1 influenza causing illness in a cat. There is no evidence that cats are carriers of the H1N1 influenza virus.

What other types of animals can catch the H1N1 influenza virus? The H1N1 influenza virus has been reported in pigs in 10 countries, turkeys in Canada and Chile, and ferrets in Oregon and Nebraska. In most cases, the infection appeared to cause mild signs. There is a separate strain of influenza that dogs can catch from other dogs called Canine Influenza H3N8. People cannot catch the Canine H3N8 Influenza virus.

What symptoms would I see in my cat if it developed H1N1 influenza infection?

Since only one cat has shown signs of illness, this question cannot be answered with certainty. Symptoms are expected to be mild and include coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, fever, and reduced appetite. Please note that there are many more common infections that can cause these same symptoms in cats and other pets.

Can I catch H1N1 influenza from my pet? At the moment there are no reports of any person contracting the H1N1 virus from a pet. Nonetheless, pet owners may take simple precautions to prevent transmission of the virus, especially if your pet is ill. Read below for details.

Can animals catch this virus from each other? Currently, there are no reports of this virus spreading from pet to pet. However, pet owners should read more below for simple steps can reduce the spread of any germs between pets.

How can I protect my pets and myself against H1N1? Good hygiene and sanitation help protect the whole family.

- Cover your cough with a sturdy tissue or sneeze into your elbow
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing, before or after touching your face, or before eating
- Wash your hands before and after handling your pet or your pet's food bowl, water bowl, bedding, or other supplies
- Keep sick pets in a separate area, away from healthy pets
- Do not allow your pet to sit or sleep close to your face, especially if you or your pet are ill
- Contact your veterinarian or veterinary clinic if your pet becomes ill.
 - Call your veterinary clinic before bringing your pet in to them
- Keep your pet's bedding, food and water bowls clean
- Keep your pet up-to-date on vaccinations and other preventative care recommended by your veterinarian

Can my pet be vaccinated against H1N1? No. There is no vaccine created for pets against this virus. Human vaccines cannot safely be used on pets.

VETERINARIANS - How can we get pets tested for suspected H1N1 influenza? Veterinarians that believe they may be examining an animal with H1N1 influenza should consult with their local public health authority. In Los Angeles County, veterinarians may contact the Veterinary Public Health Program at 877-747-2243 and ask to speak to one of the veterinarians. Veterinarians should advise clients that own such pets about basic hand washing and sanitation practices that can help prevent the spread of any infectious agent.