



## **Swine Flu: Information for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women**

**If you have questions about swine flu during pregnancy or breastfeeding, please call the Pregnancy Risk Line at 1-800-822-2229 to speak with one of our phone counselors.**

### **Background:**

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is caused by a type of influenza virus called H1N1. Symptoms are very similar to those caused by other flu viruses and include body aches, fever, cough, stomach upset, vomiting, and diarrhea. As with other flu illnesses, symptoms may be worse in people who have underlying medical conditions. For more information about the swine flu, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu> or go to the Utah Department of Health's website: [www.health.utah.gov/swineflu](http://www.health.utah.gov/swineflu).

There is little information on effects of Swine flu in pregnant or breastfeeding women. However, similar flu viruses have not been shown to cause birth defects in babies whose mothers had the flu. There is some concern that the symptoms of the flu may be more severe in pregnant women. For this reason, it is important to try to protect yourself from getting sick, and to contact your health care provider if you become ill.

### **Help prevent yourself and others from getting sick:**

- Avoid close contact with people who are obviously ill.
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid traveling to Mexico, where the swine flu outbreak has been most severe.
- Follow the local and national news to find out new information about swine flu as it becomes available.

### **If you become sick:**

- Contact your health care provider.

- If you have a fever over 101°F, take Tylenol (acetaminophen). Follow the instructions on the package.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Your doctor may recommend medications to treat specific flu symptoms, such as cough. If you have questions about the safety of these medications during pregnancy and breastfeeding, please contact the Pregnancy Risk Line toll-free at 1-800-822-2229 to speak with one of our specialists.
- Treatment with antiviral medications in pregnancy or breastfeeding women is generally not recommended as it is not clear if they may be harmful to the baby. However, antiviral medications may be prescribed by a doctor if a mother's illness becomes severe. For more information, please see the fact sheet: [Antiviral Medications to Treat/Prevent Influenza and Pregnancy](#) or call Pregnancy Risk line at 1-800-822-2229.
- If you are breastfeeding, do not stop nursing your baby. When you become ill, you already have antibodies in your breast milk that will help the baby stay well. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids.