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## CDC Information About Antiviral Drugs and Swine Flu

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that act against influenza viruses, including swine influenza viruses. Antiviral drugs can be used to treat swine flu or to prevent infection with swine flu viruses. These medications must be prescribed by a health care professional. Influenza antiviral drugs only work against influenza viruses – they will not help treat or prevent symptoms caused by infection from other viruses that cause symptoms similar to the flu.

Four antiviral drugs are approved for use in the United States: oseltamivir, zanamivir, amantadine and rimantadine. The swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses detected in humans in the U.S. are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine, so those antiviral drugs will not work against the current swine influenza viruses. Laboratory testing on the swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses so far indicate they can be treated by oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®).

### Benefits of Antiviral Drugs

**Treatment:** If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started as soon as possible after getting sick. They might not work if started more than 48 hours after illness starts.

**Prevention:** Antiviral drugs also can be used to prevent influenza when they are given to a person who is not ill, but has been (or may be near) a person with swine influenza. When used to prevent the flu, antiviral drugs are 70 percent to 90 percent effective. When used for prevention, the number of days to use antiviral drugs will vary, depending on each person's particular situation.

### CDC Recommendation

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends use of Tamiflu or Relenza for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

**Tamiflu** is approved to both treat and prevent influenza A and B virus infection in people one year of age and older.

**Relenza** is approved to treat influenza A and B virus infection in people seven years and older and to prevent influenza A and B virus infection in people five years and older.

For more information about swine flu, please visit [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu)

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