

H1N1 now transmittable to pets says WHO

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With communities already on red alert for signs of spreading H1N1 (swine flu), the news that animals are now also at risk gives the pandemic a new twist.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has been quick to respond, making statements to caution farm workers and pet owners of the new changes. A spokesperson for the WHO spoke out, saying this shows how virulent the virus has proven to be. And the changing virus is on the move.

[MSNBC](#) reported confirmed cases of H1N1 in pigs, turkeys, on mink farms, and in "some household pets." In their own report, the news talk show "[National Public Radio](#)" is also spreading the story of a sick owner who has infected her cat. Yes, the virus can in fact be passed back and forth between people and animals.

Some flu vaccines are already developed and available for pets, such as the influenza vaccine for dogs and one for horses. The flu virus first showed up in canines five years ago when greyhounds on the race track began to get sick. Dog owners who are concerned can request a vaccination if they want it. Horses should be vaccinated yearly.

Signs of influenza include coughing, fever and nasal discharge. Pet owners are urged to contact a local veterinarian for information on vaccines or if they believe their pet is sick.

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