

2009 (novel) H1N1 Influenza

Recent reports about isolated cases of novel H1N1 in ferrets and a cat are prompting questions from pet owners. The following information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a good overview of the topic of 2009 H1N1 virus and animals. Additional information from the CDC and the American Veterinary Medical Association can be accessed using the links provided at the end of the summary.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about H1N1 and Animals, from the CDC:

What animals can be infected with the 2009 H1N1 virus?

In addition to humans, live swine and turkeys, we know that ferrets (which are highly susceptible to influenza A viruses) and a domestic cat have been infected with 2009 H1N1 virus. CDC is working closely with domestic and international public and animal health partners to continually monitor this situation and will provide additional information to the public as it becomes available.

How do companion animals become infected with 2009 H1N1?

All available information suggests that the ferrets and the domestic cat with 2009 H1N1 infections acquired the virus through close contact with ill humans. Transmission of 2009 H1N1 virus from humans to animals appears similar to human-to-human transmission

Can I get 2009 H1N1 influenza from my pet?

Available evidence suggests that transmission has been from ill humans to their companion animals. No evidence is available to suggest that animals are infecting humans with 2009 H1N1 virus.

For additional information:

From the American Veterinary Medical Association:

Answers to Questions from Pet Owners,

http://www.avma.org/public_health/influenza/new_virus/new_flu_virus_faq_pet_owners.asp

Answers to Questions from Veterinarians

http://www.avma.org/public_health/influenza/new_virus/new_flu_virus_faq_veterinarians.asp

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

2009 H1N1 in Companion Animals

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm#f>