



**Q4:** Are N95 facemasks the most effective?

**A:** N95 masks are made for men and women who spend their days busy with scalpels. There is one major drawback: The N95 not only helps prevent the inhalation of airborne contaminants, it makes breathing more difficult.

**Q3:** Is my flimsy cotton facemask completely useless?

**A:** That depends on the situation, the type of facemask and whether you just want to look stylish or appear polite. If you are infected, put it on. If you have bad breath, put it on.



**Q5:** Can I avoid infection by eating less pork?

**A:** No — otherwise the virus would be called pork flu, not swine flu.

**Q6:** What else can I do to avoid contracting the flu?

**A:** Frequently washing your hands is the best precaution — as with dating, personal hygiene is key. To kill germs, experts recommend washing with soap for 15 to 30 seconds. Keep your hands away from your face to avoid passing the virus to your mouth or nose. And reduce stress and get a good night's sleep — stress and sleep deprivation can both compromise immune system responses.

**Q7:**

Can I smoke and booze my way through the symptoms?

**A:** No. Smokers and people who drink alcohol frequently suffer from more flu complications than the average person. This is because smoking paralyzes the cilia, the cells inside the nose and airways that filter incoming viruses, while even moderate consumption of alcohol can reduce immune system responses.

Knowledge is power: the ins and outs of flu

**Q1:** Is the flu mostly transmitted by air?

**A:** If infected person A sneezes or coughs, and healthy person B takes a deep breath while in the vicinity, then there is a high risk of airborne transmission. The virus can also survive for a period of time outside the human body — aside from coughing and sneezing, the flu is also frequently contracted by touching something contaminated with the virus and then delivering it to the nose or mouth.



**Q2:** If I don a facemask, will my chances of catching the flu be reduced?

**A:** The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says there is not a lot of evidence that masks do much good. Scientists say wearing a facemask is only necessary for infected people.



PHOTOS: TAIPEI TIMES

**WHAT THE EXPERT SAYS:**

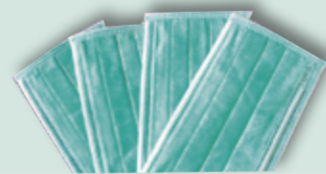


"Since the flu season is about to start, people should seek medical attention at the onset of symptoms. Even though most patients recover from flu after a few days, doctors often prescribe medication to prevent family members from becoming infected. It's important that the patient wears a facemask and washes his or her hands regularly."

— Liu Yongqing (劉永慶), Department of Health



**SWINE FLU QUIZ:**



**Q1:** Who doesn't need a facemask?

- a. doctors, nurses, etc
- b. infected people
- c. healthy members of the general public

**Q2:** Which statement is wrong?

- a. Surgical masks can conveniently be used for two to three days
- b. N95 facemasks can filter out almost anything, but should only be worn once

**Q3:** Which of these actions will not increase the likelihood of infection?

- a. hanging out with an infected person, but not wearing a mask and not washing hands
- b. eating pork
- c. sitting next to an infected person on a plane for more than eight hours

ANSWERS: Q1 C, Q2 B, Q3 B

**THE COUGH ETIQUETTE GUIDE**



**Do:** Cough and sneeze in tissue paper (not a cloth handkerchief), dispose of it properly and wash your hands.



**Do:** The elegant standing crane arm defense. Needs some practice.



**Don't:** Holding your nose and mouth closed while sneezing or coughing is a natural reflex, yet a hopelessly counterproductive one. The virus-containing aerosols will contaminate your hands, and your hands contaminate everything they come in contact with for hours after exposure.