

Swine Vesicular Disease

What is swine vesicular disease and what causes it?

Swine vesicular disease is a contagious viral disease of pigs. Illness is characterized by the development of blisters, open sores and ulcers around the mouth and on the legs. The disease is not life-threatening and affected pigs usually recover on their own. This disease is important due to its similarity to a number of other vesicular diseases, particularly foot and mouth disease. Swine vesicular disease has been eradicated from many countries, but can be found in parts of Europe (southern Italy) and Asia. The disease is not found in North America, so in the U.S. it is referred to as a foreign animal disease.

What animals get swine vesicular disease?

Pigs are the only natural host for the swine vesicular disease virus.

How can my animal get swine vesicular disease?

Swine vesicular disease is highly contagious through **direct contact** with infected pigs or the contaminated environment. The virus is found in secretions from the mouth and nose, and in the feces of infected animals. The virus can enter healthy pigs through open skin wounds, contact with mucous membranes, or by **ingestion**. Transfer of the virus on **fomites**, (e.g. contaminated vehicles) and earthworms, play an important role in the spread of disease.

How does swine vesicular disease affect my animal?

Swine vesicular disease is characterized by the formation of blisters and ulcerations on the legs,

and around the mouth. Sores and lesions can also occasionally be seen on the snout, lips, tongue, and teats. Affected pigs may also develop fever, stop eating for a few days, and lose weight. Some pigs do not show any signs of disease at all. Most pigs usually make a full recovery within 2 to 3 weeks.

Can I get swine vesicular disease?

Yes, however this is rare. Some laboratory personnel working closely with the virus have developed symptoms of disease. Producers and veterinarians in close contact with infected pigs have not developed the disease.

Who should I contact if I suspect swine vesicular disease?

In Animals – Contact your veterinarian immediately. Swine vesicular disease is not currently found in the U.S.; suspicion of disease requires immediate attention.

In Humans – Contact your physician.

How can I protect my animal from swine vesicular disease?

Animals imported from countries where swine vesicular disease exists must be carefully examined by veterinarians upon entry into the United States. Any new animals entering the farm should be quarantined away from the rest of the herd until it is determined that they are healthy and there is no risk to the other animals on the farm. No vaccine is available.

In areas where the virus is found, pigs should be monitored closely for signs of disease and separated from the rest of the herd if vesicles are seen. Pigs should not be fed pork products that may contain the virus. Proper disposal of infected carcasses is important, as earthworms have been known to carry the virus when infected carcasses are buried in the soil. Disinfection of all contaminated areas, including transport vehicles, is essential to prevent further spread of disease.

How can I protect myself from swine vesicular disease?

Laboratory personnel working with swine vesicular disease virus must take all necessary precautions to prevent themselves from becoming infected.

For More Information

CFSPH Technical Fact Sheets. Swine Vesicular Disease at <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/>

Swine Vesicular Disease is a highly contagious viral disease of swine that has with severe economic consequences.



Photo: Ulcers on the snout and foot of a pig. From USDA Plum Island Animal Disease Center.