



CINCINNATI HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Monitoring national outbreak of H1N1 (swine flu)

May 8, 2009

The Cincinnati Health Department (CHD) is monitoring the situation.

We are in constant communication with public health partners at the local, state, federal and global levels. We are also in contact with hospitals, schools and health professionals in the city ensuring they have the latest guidance on how to treat the virus.

- As of today the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed over 1600 cases of the flu virus infection in 41 states and 849 probable cases in the United States, including 6 in Ohio and two deaths in Texas.
- Fortunately this virus appears to be mild in nature however we do expect around the U.S. that we will see more cases, hospitalizations and deaths from this outbreak over the coming days and weeks.
- The World Health Organization has raised the pandemic alert level to 5 which means a pandemic is likely imminent. There are no cases reported in Cincinnati however preparations continue. (1 probable case in each Butler County, OH, and Kenton County, KY)
- This is an important time to review or create a personal preparedness plan for you and your family to keep you safe during a pandemic, national disaster or other unforeseen circumstance. For more information <http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/> or www.ready.gov

Keep Calm—Cincinnati has a practiced plan and preparations are underway.

While the appearance of this new virus has not caused a pandemic yet, the regional health partners have practiced a plan for years in the event a flu pandemic reaches our area.

Here's what you can do:

- If you are experiencing flu like symptoms you should see your physician and limit contact with others. Be sure to inform your health care provider upon arrival so that proper precautions can be taken.
 - The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include sudden onset of fever and cough, often with sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting.
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- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue in the trash. If a tissue is not available, use the inside of your elbow to cover your cough or sneeze, not your hands
- Try to stay 6 feet from others when coughing or sneezing
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.

There are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy.

- Hand sanitizer should be readily available, especially in areas where there is a lot of public interaction.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Try to stay 6 feet away from people who are coughing or sneezing.

CDC recommends that U.S. travelers avoid all nonessential travel to Mexico.

- Changes to this recommendation will be posted at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/>.
- If you must travel to Mexico, there are steps you should take to reduce your risk of infection:
 - First, prepare for your trip before you leave by monitoring the international situation; checking with your doctor about prescription antiviral medications; packing a travel health kit; reviewing your health insurance plan; and finding where you can get health care services while traveling.
 - Practice healthy habits to help stop the spread of germs including washing your hands often with soap and water, covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and following all local health advice. This may include being asked to wear a surgical mask to protect others.
 - Remember if you are traveling to Mexico, you should be sure you get a seasonal flu vaccination. It is not expected to protect against swine flu, but it will protect you against seasonal flu.
 - After you return from Mexico pay close attention to your health for 10 days. If you become sick with a fever PLUS a cough and sore throat, or if you have trouble breathing during the 10 days after you return see a doctor.

Pork Consumption

H1N1 swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You can not get influenza from eating properly prepared pork or pork products.

Resources

- Check the city's website at www.cincinnati-oh.gov for more information.
 - Call the Southwest Ohio Public Health Swine Flu information line hosted by the CHD at (513) 357-7499.
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- The ODH swine flu information line – 1-866-800-1404 – is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
 - Center for Disease Control website www.cdc.gov/swineflu/
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