

ISDH Long Term Care
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Special Health Alert Issue:

- Influenza A (H1N1) Update
and Interim Guidance

Health Alert

Influenza A (H1N1) Update
and Interim Guidance [Swine Flu]

Influenza Information for Long Term Care Facilities

April 26, 2009 STATE OFFICIALS CLOSELY MONITOR HUMAN CASES OF SWINE INFLUENZA A (H1N1)

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) are closely monitoring human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection identified in the United States.

In addition to intensifying surveillance among flu sentinel physicians in the state, the Indiana State Department of Health has also sent information out to public health workers over the Indiana Health Alert Network and will share with physicians the interim guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The IDHS is urging public safety professionals, including paramedics, EMTs, police officers, firefighters, and emergency management workers, to take necessary precautions to safeguard their health as they interact and preserve the safety of the public.

"It's too early to be classified as a pandemic," said Joe Wainscott, executive director of the IDHS. "Each of us can make a difference. Limiting contact with others can help slow the spread of illness. Together, we can help protect ourselves, our families, and our communities. In most instances of the flu, those suffering can be cared for at home. Be aware, plan ahead, and share with others what you have learned."

"We advise Hoosiers to stay calm and practice normal precautions to avoid influenza and other respiratory diseases. If you have milder symptoms of influenza, we advise you to stay home and contact your health care provider for advice," said State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe M.D.

"This is a novel human virus, which means we do not have a vaccine to prevent it," said Dr. Monroe. "Individuals aged 65 and older or those with chronic diseases and immune deficiencies are at higher risk for severe complications from influenza, including pneumonia. If these individuals have not received the pneumococcal vaccine, they should discuss with their physician getting the vaccine."

The symptoms of influenza in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Dr. Monroe reminds the public to follow basic precautionary measures to prevent the spread of a cold, influenza, or any infectious disease, including:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the

trash after you use it. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve, rather than your hands, if a tissue is not available.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

State health officials note swine influenza viruses are *not* transmitted by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the infection and whether additional people have been infected with similar swine influenza viruses. The CDC is working very closely with state and local officials in affected states, as well as with health officials in Mexico, Canada and the World Health Organization. The CDC has determined this virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, they have not determined how easily the virus spreads between people.

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza in pigs. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with swine flu have occurred. Most commonly, these cases occur in persons with direct exposure to pigs.

Obtaining Drugs and Supplies

The ISDH received questions in regard to Tamiflu and how to access the supply if there is a shortage. The long term care facility and pharmacy should use their supply and go through their usual procurement process to obtain additional supply as needed. If unavailable from the normal supplier, the pharmacy should contact the local health department for distribution according to the local distribution plan. The state will be distributing emergency supplies through the local health departments.

H1N1 Influenza Update & Guidance Information for Physicians

On Tuesday, April 21, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that two recent cases of febrile respiratory illness in children in southern California had been caused by a novel strain of influenza A (H1N1) which had not been reported in the United States or elsewhere previously. The novel virus contains genetic segments from N. American swine influenza A (H1N1), European/Asian swine influenza A (H1N1), N. American avian and human influenza viruses. By April 24, additional cases were being reported from southern California and Texas. At the same time health authorities in Mexico announced an influenza outbreak from this virus in southern and central Mexico. This message is to provide and update and provide guidance to health care workers in Indiana.

This outbreak is very fluid at the moment and changes are occurring daily. Interim guidance is available on the CDC Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance/>. The ISDH will be developing a page with information for Indiana health professionals and will provide you with the URL as soon as possible.

Current Situation:

- World Health Organization reports that 1000+ cases and approximately 81 deaths have occurred in Mexico due to infection with a novel swine influenza virus. Twenty three cases have been confirmed as Swine Influenza (H1N1) genetically identical to the CA cases.
- In the US confirmed cases have been identified in CA (7), TX (2), Kansas (2) and suspect cases in NYC (8) and OH (4).
 - One of the KS cases had a history of travel to Mexico and had transmitted the virus to a close family member
 - Other cases, but not all, had travel history to Mexico

- None of the cases report exposure to swine
- No swine or avian outbreaks with this virus stain have been reported in the U.S. or elsewhere
- Transmission appears to be human-to-human.
- All US cases have been mild cases with one case requiring a brief hospitalization.
- The World Health Organization is meeting to determine if Pandemic Level should be changed
- Increased surveillance for influenza has been initiated by CDC, IN, and other states
- Current seasonal influenza vaccine may not provide protection.

Clinical Information

- Consider the possibility of swine influenza in patients who present with a febrile respiratory illness who:
 - Live in an area where swine influenza cases have been confirmed.
 - Have traveled to Mexico or areas where virus has been reported.
 - Had contact in the past 7 days with ill individuals who had recent history of travel to Mexico, or States reporting swine influenza.
- Clinical symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to those of seasonal influenza and may include:
 - Fever (greater than 100 degree F)
 - Sore throat
 - Cough
 - Stuffy nose
 - Chills
 - Headache and body aches
 - Fatigue
 - Nausea and vomiting have also been reported
 - Severe illness (respiratory distress and pneumonia) have been reported in people with this virus.

Treatment/Guidance

- The virus is sensitive to Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir) and guidance for the use of those drugs in ill individuals is presented at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/recommendations.htm>
- Isolation is recommended for those who are ill
- Quarantine for contacts of cases may be used in limited circumstances on a voluntary basis
- Infection control for care of patients confirmed or suspected of having an infection with Swine Influenza A (H1N1) in health care settings can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidelines_infection_control.htm
- Interim guidance on the use of facemask in community settings can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/masks.htm>

Resources for Patient Education (some contain printable materials for patients)

- CDC Influenza page: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>
- Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance_homecare.htm
- Seasonal Flu: what to do if you get sick: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/whattodo.htm>
- Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>

Judy Monroe, MD
State Health Commissioner

It is impossible at this time to determine how this current influenza outbreak might progress. Every influenza outbreak is unique. At this time, facilities should be emphasizing basic hygiene practices to include washing hands, coughing in tissue and discarding, and staying home if sick. It is also a good time to review the facility's emergency plan to ensure that everyone knows their role.

Terry Whitson
Assistant Commissioner
Indiana State Department of Health