



County of San Diego

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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San Diego County Office of Education and School Districts:

As you know, swine flu has been detected in several San Diego County residents, several of them children. I want to share with you what the situation is locally, how the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency's Division of Public Health Services is responding and what you can do.

We have been working closely with individual schools where these students attended, to look for other people who might have been exposed to the virus and who became ill. The decision to close a school where cases have been confirmed will be made jointly between Public Health Services and school administrators, under the guidelines issues by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We anticipate that there will be additional cases detected, as we are working with our health care community to enhance surveillance for the disease. Thank you for your continued collaboration with County Public Health Services as we work to protect San Diegans.

Swine Influenza Infection

Swine influenza, while common in pigs, is rarely seen in humans. Prior to these recent cases, there have been twelve swine influenza infections in humans reported in the United States since 2005. Most of these individuals had direct or indirect contact with pigs.

The symptoms of the swine influenza virus infection are similar to those of seasonal influenza. These symptoms include:

- Fever,
- Cough,
- Sore throat,
- Body aches,
- Headache,
- Chills, and
- Fatigue.

Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure), as well as deaths, have been reported with swine flu infection in people. For the confirmed cases here in San Diego County, all of these individuals have had mild disease and have recovered. The annual flu shot does not offer protection against this particular virus.

There are also many people with serious respiratory illnesses, including some deaths, being reported in Mexico. These cases are occurring primarily in the central part of the country. The CDC has also confirmed that some of the samples from Mexico have tested positive for a similar swine flu virus. The illnesses in Mexico have ranged from mild to serious, some resulting in death. What we have learned is that there is evidence of transmission from person-to-person. I encourage everyone to follow the federal government's travel advisory and limit non-essential travel to Mexico.

What You Can Do

- Reassure school staff, students, and families that this is not a pandemic influenza situation. There have currently been limited cases in San Diego, all of whom have had mild symptoms.
- We encourage those with questions or concerns about Swine Influenza to contact 2-1-1.
- For school officials and staff, if you have a particular concern about swine flu, or are concerned about possible exposure in your school, please call the County Public Health Services at (619) 515-6620.
- School personnel who are sick with flu-like symptoms should stay home.
- Students who are ill should stay home while sick.
- If ill individuals see their healthcare providers, samples will likely not be collected to test for swine flu. We are recommending to health care providers that samples to test for swine flu be collected on hospitalized patients, but not from all patients presenting with flu-like symptoms.
- Promote and practice good hand hygiene – wash your hand properly and often.
- Cover your cough – with a tissue, or sneeze into your sleeve.

I want to thank you again for assisting Public Health Services in our efforts to protect the residents of San Diego County. For updates on swine flu please:

- Call 2-1-1
- Visit the County of San Diego Website: www.sdcounty.ca.gov
- Visit the CDC Swine Flu We Page: www.cdc.gov/swineflu
- Read the attached CDC Fact Sheet

Sincerely,



Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H.
Public Health Officer



Swine Flu & You

Information for People Living in San Diego County

What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. Outbreaks of swine flu happen regularly in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Most commonly, human cases of swine flu happen in people who are around pigs but it's possible for swine flu viruses to spread from person to person also.

Are humans infected with swine flu in San Diego County?

In late March and early April 2009, cases of swine flu were first reported in Southern California and near San Antonio, Texas. At this time, human cases of swine flu infection have been reported in San Diego County. CDC and local and state health agencies are working together to investigate this situation.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

CDC has determined that this virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How serious is swine flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Between 2005 until January 2009, 12 human cases of swine flu were detected in the U.S. with no deaths occurring. However, swine flu infection can be serious. In September 1988, a previously healthy 32-year-old pregnant woman in Wisconsin was hospitalized for pneumonia after being infected with swine flu and died 8 days later. A swine flu outbreak in Fort Dix, New Jersey occurred in 1976 that caused more than 200 cases with serious illness in several people and one death.

How do you catch swine flu?

Spread of swine flu can occur in two ways:

- Through contact with infected pigs or environments contaminated with swine flu viruses.
- Through contact with a person with swine flu. Human-to-human spread of swine flu has been documented also and is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others?

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you 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 this way.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in San Diego County and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact their health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

More information on swine flu can be found at www.cdc.gov/flu/swine, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.