

April 26, 2009

Swine Influenza A (H1N1) Information for Child Care Providers

The CDC has identified cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in people in California, Texas and Kansas with possible cases in New York. The CDC is working with local and state health agencies to investigate these cases. It has been determined that this virus is spreading from human to human.

Mexico has reported increased levels of respiratory disease including reports of severe pneumonia cases and deaths. The swine influenza viruses identified by CDC from cases in Mexico are similar to swine influenza viruses from patients in the United States, however the limited number of patients identified thus far in the US have not been severe, with only one hospitalized person. However, the CDC is concerned about these cases in the United States and the World Health Organization are concerned about continued spread of this new virus. Right now, there is no vaccine for this new virus and the current seasonal influenza is thought to be unlikely to provide protection against this new strain.

For child care providers, it would be prudent to:

- First, and most importantly, remind parents that ill children must stay at home during their illness.
- Staff should not come to work while ill.
- A child may be infectious for up to 10 days after illness onset with influenza while adults are generally infectious for 5-7 days.
- Provide information to parents on steps that they could take to prevent flu. (See attached fact sheet that could be distributed to each parent or posted on a door to the facilities with providers calling attention to the posted fact sheet).

Staff can help protect the health of their workers and the children and families they serve by calling attention to the every day preventive actions that parents can initiate to protect their children. (Please post the attached message).

Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs

Fact Sheet

1. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

2. Stay home when you are sick.

Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. Keep sick children at home. You will help prevent others from catching the illness.

3. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

4. Wash your hands often.

Washing your hands and the hands of your children often will help protect you from germs.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

There is no vaccine available at this time for the current outbreak of the Swine Flu virus, so it is important for people living in the affected areas to take steps to prevent spreading the virus to others. If people are ill, they should stay at home and limit contact with others, except to seek medical care. Healthy residents living in these areas should take the everyday preventive actions listed above.

People who live in these areas who develop an illness with fever and respiratory symptoms, such as cough and runny nose, and possibly other symptoms, such as body aches, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, should contact their health care provider. Their health care provider will determine whether influenza testing is needed.