



Swine-Origin Influenza A (H1N1) (S-OIV) Update Noon, Wednesday, April 29, 2009

CURRENT STATUS

There are no confirmed cases of swine flu (swine-origin influenza A H1N1) in Los Angeles County. Public Health continues to investigate possible cases and monitor the level of illness in the county (e.g., patient visits for influenza-like illness and hospitalizations). To date, illness from swine flu in the U.S. has been mild; most swine flu illnesses have resolved without complications.

Key Prevention Tips:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Wash your hands often
- Cover your cough
- Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose and mouth)

Don't prescribe or request Tamiflu for routine illnesses.

Tamiflu® (oseltamivir) can't effectively treat current strains of seasonal flu, and seasonal flu is still circulating in L.A. County. In addition, there are many other illnesses that have similar symptoms as flu (fever, cough, fatigue), but are not flu and antivirals will **not** make you better. Incorrect and overuse of antivirals is dangerous and can lead to further antiviral resistance.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I know if I have swine flu?

The symptoms of swine flu are the same as those for regular flu: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, chills, headache, fatigue. Some cases also have had vomiting and diarrhea.

How do I keep from getting swine flu?

Prevention recommendations are the same as seasonal flu: wash your hands often, avoid close contact with people who are sick, avoid touching your face (eyes, nose, and mouth).

What should I do if I have flu-like symptoms?

Anyone that is sick (fever, cough sore throat) should stay home—not just now, but always! If you are sick, do not return to work or school until 1 or 2 days after symptoms end.

Should I be tested for swine flu?

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health recommends testing only for people experiencing severe symptoms (hospitalized illness) or for those with flu-like symptoms and known exposure to another swine flu case or recent travel to an area with cases (i.e., Mexico).

Should I buy medicines to treat flu?

Antiviral medications should be taken only under the guidance of a medical doctor since medicines can have side effects, especially if they are not taken correctly. It is important to remember that most flu-like illness resolves without the need to see a doctor or to take medication (besides basic over-the-counter medicines to reduce fever and make you feel better). It is also important to remember that many other illnesses cause flu-like symptoms—and if your illness is not caused by the flu, flu antivirals will not make you better. In addition, regular seasonal flu is still circulating in Los Angeles County and these viruses are resistant (cannot be treated

Keep emergency rooms and hospitals free to treat serious illnesses!

People with mild illnesses should not go to ERs or hospitals for treatment. Most people with flu-like illness will get better without the need to see a doctor and without the need for special medicines or treatment.

effectively) with Tamiflu. Incorrect and overuse of antivirals is not only dangerous, but can also lead to further viral resistance.

What are more serious signs of flu illness?

While to date most swine flu cases in the U.S. have been mild, and in general people with flu-like illness will get better without complications, seek medical care if you experience any of these more severe symptoms:

For children:

- If flu-like symptoms do not get better after a few days or become worse
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Dehydration; not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up, not interacting; Confusion, being disoriented
- Fever with a rash

For adults:

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

How do I care for someone with flu-like illness?

The same as always: provide water or other fluids, and watch to see if symptoms get worse or do not resolve. Many basic over-the-counter medications can reduce fever and make people feel better. Precautions to limit the spread of flu-like illness when caring for someone are the same as what you should do for regular colds and flu:

- Limit contact with the sick person and avoid close contact (kissing, hugging)
- Do not share personal hygiene items (toothbrushes, towels)
- Wash your hands often

Should I keep my child out of school?

No. There are no confirmed cases of swine flu in Los Angeles County. Children that are sick should stay at home until better—not just now, but always.

Can people who have just come from Mexico be allowed to return to school or work?

LACDPH does not recommend restricting people from any public events or interaction simply due to recent travel to affected areas, even Mexico. Thousands of people travel to and from Mexico daily, and quarantine recommendations for these people have not been enacted by local or federal agencies. As mentioned during our press conference (it's on YouTube), we are beyond containment and now focusing on mitigation. Instead, ALL people should monitor their health. Everyone should avoid all public activities if they are sick; and not just now, but always.

Instead of singling out people who have traveled to Mexico, focus should be on identifying those with flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, etc.). This is a great opportunity for schools and businesses to stress the importance of staying home when sick, and basic respiratory hygiene practices (wash your hands, cover your cough, etc).

Where can I get more information?

For more information call 2-1-1 or visit www.lapublichealth.org.

911 is not for health information!
Keep emergency lines free.