

Public Health Alert

Imperial County Public Health Department

935 Broadway
El Centro, California 92243



Date: April 20, 2009

Subject: SWINE INFLUENZA HEALTH ALERT—IMPERIAL AND SAN DIEGO COUNTIES

- Two children, one a resident of Imperial County and one a resident of San Diego County, have recently been diagnosed with swine influenza A (H1N1). There are no known links between these two children and no known common exposures. Both children had self-limited influenza illness and have recovered; neither required hospitalization.
- Swine influenza (swine flu) is an endemic respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza, typically H1N1 and H3N2 strains.
- Swine flu viruses do **not** normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with swine flu do occur. Since 2005, 12 human cases of swine flu have been detected in other parts of the U.S.
- Most commonly, these cases occur in persons with direct exposure to pigs (e.g., workers in the swine industry). Although it has been documented, human to human transmission of swine flu is rare. Neither infected child is known to have had contact with domestic or feral pigs, but investigation continues.
- Seasonal human influenza vaccine usually does not protect against swine influenza A H1N1 viruses, which are very different in their antigens from human H1N1 viruses; Investigation of these case viruses is in progress

HEIGHTENED SURVEILLANCE FOR POSSIBLE SWINE INFLUENZA

- It is important to investigate swine flu cases to ensure that human-to-human transmission is not occurring and to monitor for the emergence of novel influenza viruses in the community.
- At this time, there is no indication of an increase in influenza-like illness in San Diego or Imperial counties.

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Surveillance specimen collection:

- Between now and May 1, 2009, we ask that influenza sentinel surveillance providers and emergency room clinicians in Imperial and San Diego counties collect specimens from outpatients presenting with influenza-like illness (ILI):
 - Fever $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ (100°F) and cough and/or sore throat
- We also request that specimens be collected from patients hospitalized for undiagnosed acute respiratory illness, or suspect or confirmed influenza.
- Please see infection control precautions below.
- Specimen collection: Please collect up to 2 nasopharyngeal or throat swabs from each patient with ILI, placing the swabs in a standard container with 2-3 ml of viral transport media. If the patient is hospitalized with pneumonia, specimens from the lower respiratory tract (e.g., tracheal aspirate, bronchoalveolar lavage) should also be obtained. Specimens should be collected within the first 24-72 hours of onset of symptoms and no later than 5 days after onset of symptoms.
- Specimen storage: The specimens should be kept refrigerated at 4°C and sent on cold packs if they can be received by the Imperial County Public Health laboratory within five days of the date collected. If samples will be received by the laboratory in five or more days, they should be frozen at -70°C or below and transported on dry ice.

Infection control precautions:

- Health-care workers providing care for patients with ILI who are not known contacts of a laboratory-confirmed swine flu case should use droplet precautions (i.e., wear a surgical or procedure mask for close contact), in addition to standard precautions including hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Health-care workers providing care for an ill close contact of a laboratory-confirmed swine flu case should:
 - 1) Wear a fit-tested N95 respirator (if unavailable, wear a tightly fitting surgical mask), disposable gloves, gown, and eye protection (face shield or goggles).*
 - 2) When care is completed, place all personal protective equipment (PPE) in a biohazard bag for appropriate disinfection and disposal.

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3) Clean hands thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel.

*If all elements of PPE are not available, respiratory protection (N95 respirator or surgical mask) is most important.

- Suspect swine flu patients (ill close contact of a laboratory-confirmed swine flu case) should be asked to don a surgical mask and should be placed promptly in an airborne infection isolation room, if available, or in a single room with a door that closes.

For additional information about swine flu or this surveillance please contact:

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