

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Swine Flu Update

By

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Kingsford, Michigan – April 27, 2009. The national Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) have been keeping local health departments and other medical care facilities and providers up-to-date on newly diagnosed cases of Swine Flu in Mexico and the United States.

As of this morning, there have been 20 confirmed cases of this new flu virus in the United States. While the majority of cases have been in the Southwest, new cases have now been identified in Ohio, Kansas and New York. There is one probable case in Michigan to date. Swine flu routinely circulates among swine and there have been small outbreaks of swine flu among people in the US over the years, because flu viruses can be passed back and forth between people and live swine. Current human cases are caused by a new strain of swine flu, which has not been previously seen. None of the U.S. cases have had contact with live swine which suggests that this is being transmitted person to person. You cannot get Swine Flu by eating pork products.

So far, cases in the US have been relatively mild and not unlike the usual circulating flu. There has been only one brief hospitalization and no deaths related to the infection in this country. Symptoms have been similar to our usual flu and may include fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat and body aches. This flu may also include nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, along with the respiratory symptoms. In general, flu viruses are spread by contact with droplets dispersed by ill individuals through coughing or sneezing. To help prevent spread of all flu, cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, wash your hands frequently, use hand sanitizers when you cannot wash and avoid rubbing your eyes, nose or mouth, unless your hands are clean. Most importantly, try to stay at home if you are ill (except to see your doctor, if needed).

This virus can be treated with anti-viral medication such as Tamiflu and Relenza, which are both widely available in the U.S. The CDC and MDCH have asked the local medical community to consider a diagnosis of swine flu in patients with symptoms described above who have either travelled to areas with known cases (California, New York, Texas, Ohio, Kansas, Mexico) or have been in contact with someone who has recently travelled to one of these areas. If you are ill with the type of symptoms listed above, it is important to contact your doctor and mention any travel or contact with a known case.

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It is very likely new cases will continue to be identified over the next weeks. It is important to remember that US cases to date have had a relatively mild illness and that there is medication that can both help to prevent illness in exposed individuals and treat it in those who become ill.

Using good prevention practices is always a good idea, even more so in flu season. Contact your doctor or local health department if you have any questions.

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