

Updated Information on Swine Flu

Swine Flu (H1N1) Information (PA Department of Health)

Human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection have been identified in the United States and internationally.

Pennsylvania currently has one confirmed case located in Montgomery (1) county and several probable cases located in the following counties Philadelphia (2), Montgomery (2), Lycoming (1), Luzerne (1) and Bucks (1) counties.

Federal health officials have determined that this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is contagious, but it is not known how easily the virus spreads between 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.

Travel recommendations (Center for Disease Control)

CDC also has prepared some information below about issues related to the travel industry. This is a rapidly evolving situation, and CDC will provide new information as it becomes available.

At this time, CDC recommends that U.S. travelers avoid all nonessential travel to Mexico. Changes to this recommendation will be posted at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>. Please check this site frequently for updates.

If you must travel to an area that has reported cases of H1N1 flu (swine flu):

- Check updates from these sources:
 - o [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#),
 - o [Secretaria de Salud](#),
 - o [World Health Organization](#)

o Pan American Health Organization

- Monitor announcements from Mexico's Ministry of Health and local government, including information about affected areas, as not all areas are equally affected.
- Follow local public health guidelines, including any movement restrictions and prevention recommendations.
- Be aware that Mexico is checking all exiting airline passengers for signs of H1N1 flu (swine flu). Exit screening may cause significant delays at airports.

Prepare for your trip

Antiviral Medications: Antiviral medications for the prevention of H1N1 flu (swine flu) should be **considered** for travelers from the United States going to Mexico who are at high risk of severe illness from influenza. This would include persons with certain chronic medical conditions, persons aged 65 or older, children younger than 5 years old, and pregnant women. The recommended antiviral drugs for H1N1 flu (swine flu) are oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (brand name Relenza®). Both are prescription drugs that fight against H1N1 flu (swine flu) by keeping it from reproducing in the body. These drugs can prevent infection if taken as a preventative. Talk to your doctor about correct indications for using influenza antiviral medications. Always seek medical care if you are severely ill.

Further information about CDC's recommendations for antiviral use for the prophylaxis and treatment of H1N1 flu (swine flu) outbreak can be found at the following websites:

- Health-care professionals
- o <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/recommendations.htm>
- General public
- o http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/antiviral_swine.htm

For all travelers, CDC recommends the following steps to help you stay healthy:

- Be sure you are up to date with all your routine vaccinations, including a seasonal influenza vaccine. The seasonal vaccine is not expected to offer protection against H1N1 flu (swine flu), but it can protect against seasonal flu which may still be circulating in Mexico and the Southern Hemisphere.
- Pack a travel health kit that contains basic first aid and medical supplies. See [Pack Smart in Your Survival Guide to Safe and Healthy Travel](#) for a list of what to include in your travel health kit.
- Identify the health-care resources in the area(s) you will be visiting.

- Check if your health insurance plan will cover you abroad. Consider purchasing additional insurance that covers medical evacuation in case you become sick. For more information, see [Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad](#)

from the U.S. Department of State.

Remember that U.S. embassies, consulates and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or to give medications, vaccines or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (OCPA Guidance)

Q. Will the flu shot provided in fall 2008 protect people from the strain of influenza?

A. This H1N1 influenza strain is different than the human strains that were used in creating the vaccine in 2008. Therefore, we would not expect any protection from the vaccine for this particular strain. The vaccine will protect against the commonly occurring strains of human influenza.

Q. Are deployed service members in danger of infection; what preventive measures are in place across the Army?

A. Based on the most recent information, deployed service members are at no increased risk of infection. The Army is encouraging everyone to follow the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on what can be done to stay healthy. These recommendations are:

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).

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

If you get sick, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Q. Is this an epidemic or pandemic and what is the difference?

A. An outbreak is when there is an increase in the number of cases of a disease above the baseline levels. When there are a large number of cases that constitutes an epidemic. When there are multiple sites around the world of large numbers of cases that is a pandemic. The CDC is currently calling this an epidemic, but both military and civilian experts around the world are monitoring this closely.

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