

NEWS from First District Health Unit & Trinity Health

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Swine Flu Update: Precautions to Avoid Influenza Urged

Minot - A number of states have reported cases of H1N1 (Swine) flu infection in humans and cases have been reported internationally as well. ND has not had any confirmed cases of H1N1-strain Influenza as of this afternoon but there have been more than 100 confirmed cases in the US, and it appears to be spreading.

Local health officials are working diligently with other providers and public health units across the state and country to monitor and prepare for the situation should it continue to spread. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers a very thorough website guidance for both providers and the general public; everybody is encouraged to access this helpful information by visiting their internet site: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>. Any questions that are not answered on the web site can be directed to (800) CDC-INFO.

This virus affects people differently based on their own immunity, their ability to fight infection and other factors. **Preventive measures can help reduce spread and help protect individuals from getting the infection:**

- **Hand washing.** Use alcohol-based hand gels to reduce the spread of viruses or use soap and warm water, and wash for 15 to 20 seconds.
- **Cover your cough.** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it and wash your hands. If no tissue is available, cover your cough or sneeze with the inside of your elbow. Influenza is spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- **Follow home isolation practices.** If you have a fever and other flu-like symptoms (such as diarrhea or vomiting), stay home. Don't go to school. Don't send your children to school. Don't go to work.

Right now there isn't a vaccine that can prevent this strain of flu. The seasonal flu vaccine doesn't protect against the H1N1 strain of flu.

The H1N1 virus is not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

People should be considered contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possibly for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children might be contagious for longer periods.

If you are feeling ill with flu-like symptoms, (cough, sore throat, runny nose, fever, and muscle aches) officials offer the following guidance:

- Stay home until the symptoms disappear.
- If your symptoms persist and get worse and require medical assistance, call your primary care physician for an appointment.
- Physicians are following CDC guidelines to screen patients for the H1N1 virus. If the screen results are positive, you may receive a prescription for anti-viral drugs.

If you have a confirmed case of swine flu, the rest of your household should minimize their contact with others as much as possible, and remain home at the earliest sign of illness.

If you wish to visit a medical clinic or hospital due to flu-like symptoms, and have within 7 days traveled to one of the areas below, please call us immediately so that we can take the proper precautions.

- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Delaware
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kansas
- Massachusetts
- Kentucky
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Jersey
- New York
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Virginia
- Mexico

More information on Swine Flu is available at: www.cdc.gov/flu or www.ndflu.com