



Safety Advisory

August 14, 2009
(DRAFT 3/Arvizu)

Preparing for Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus

Introduction

Novel H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States (U.S.) in April 2009 and has since spread from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of novel H1N1 flu was underway. The decision by the WHO to increase the pandemic threat level should not be interpreted as cause for increased alarm. This decision was not unexpected, and does not mean that the new influenza virus is more severe. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health continues its efforts and monitoring of the Pandemic H1N1 virus.

H1N1 Signs, Symptoms and Severity

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu virus in people include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Illness with the new H1N1 virus has ranged from mild to severe. While most people who have been sick have recovered without needing medical treatment, hospitalizations and deaths from infection with this virus have occurred. For more information on the flu virus, click on this web link <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

Prevention and Treatment

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against novel H1N1 virus. However, a novel H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public in the fall. As always, a vaccine will be available to protect against seasonal influenza. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

The Centers for Disease Control and prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone follow these practical and simple illness prevention tips:

- 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.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- If you are sick with influenza like illness (ILI), CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

Community Colleges Prepare for New H1N1 Flu Outbreaks

California Community Colleges are presently preparing for a greater number of flu cases among students, faculty, and staff populations this fall. The Los Angeles Community College District is working in direct consultation with its nine colleges and the County of Los Angeles Public Health Officer in order to effectively implement CDC guidelines for higher education institutions for both the seasonal influenza and the N1H1 virus.

Preparing for H1N1 Virus

CDC Recommendations

1. Do not cancel or dismiss classes or other large gatherings of people. Maintain a high level of awareness on campus through a variety of outreach programs and multimedia communication methods; orientations, classroom instruction, websites, newspapers, flyers, signs and posters, electronic mails or text messages.
2. Use of Respiratory Protection Equipment. The District has purchased a limited amount of N95 particulate respirator (dust) masks, which are capable of filtering the H1N1 virus; however, the CDC does not promote their use among the general population. Such devices are intended to be used by emergency responders and healthcare workers who have been trained on their use and understand their limitations.
3. Personal Hand Sanitizers. The CDC encourages the use of personal hand sanitizers that are effective in reducing the spread of H1N1 virus. Individuals should consider purchasing their own devices for themselves and their families. The District may consider, in consultation with the colleges, the general purchase of such sanitizers for staff use in health centers, business offices, admissions counters, special services counters, and other service areas throughout the District during the flu season. Employees and students should be advised that, during such flu seasons, certain personal devices may not be readily available due to the high demand.
4. Contamination and Cleaning. The District's standard cleaning and sanitizing products are effective in reducing the spread of germs on campus. However, studies have shown that the influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for 2-8 hours after being deposited on the surface. Therefore, the colleges may identify areas of concern that require increased surveillance by inspection and cleaning. Employees and students are encouraged to assist by employing "clean as you go" techniques. Cooperate with custodial staff who may need to frequent restrooms for your health.

N1H1 Vaccine Prioritization

On July 29, 2009, the CDC announced the population groups that will be prioritized if the vaccine is initially available in extremely limited quantities. Several factors, including current disease patterns, how much vaccine is expected to be available, and the timing of vaccine availability, were considered when determining the priority groups. These five key populations include:

- Persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age,
- Health care and emergency services personnel,
- Pregnant women,
- People who live with or care of children younger than 6 months of age, and
- People from ages 25 through 64 years who are at higher risk for pandemic H1N1 flu infection because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Contact Information:

World Health Organization (WHO)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
County of Los Angeles Public Health Office
City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department
California Community College Chancellor's Office

<http://www.who.int/en/>
<http://www.cdc.gov>
<http://www.lapublichealth.org>
<http://www.lacity.org/emd/>
<http://emergency.cccco.edu>