

April 30, 2009 Update # 7

## *Swine Flu H1N1 (SIV) Infections - Update # 7 April 30, 2009*

### Revised Laboratory Specimen Guidance:

The Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WAPHL) uses the FDA rRT-PCR Flu Panel for the detection of influenza virus in human samples. **This procedure is approved for nasopharyngeal and nasal swabs only at this time. No other specimen types have been validated for this test.**

Local Health Department staff must call the lab to let them know specimens are being sent to them. Please call 786-5470 and leave the following information: Providers name and contact information, patients name and age, date of onset, symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, pneumonia), patients exposure, specimen collection date, and preliminary test results.

Until further notice, DOH is requesting that laboratories do the following:

- Send all clinical specimens that test positive for influenza A by rapid test to WAPHL for testing with the FDA rRT-PCR Flu Panel.
- If you receive a request for "swine flu" testing, instruct the provider to call the local health jurisdiction where the patient resides. These specimens can be shipped to WAPHL only after approval by the local health jurisdiction.

### Approved Specimen Types for FDA rRT-PCR Flu Panel:

- Nasopharyngeal or nasal swabs in Viral Transport Medium (VTM). The specimen must be refrigerated after collection and arrive on cold packs at the WAPHL within 72 hours of collection. Swabs should have a synthetic tip such as dacron or nylon and either a plastic or aluminum shaft. Cotton tipped swabs with wooden shafts are not acceptable.

All specimens should be shipped with a completed WAPHL Virology Form:

[www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/PHL/Forms/SerVirHIV.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/PHL/Forms/SerVirHIV.pdf)

For Laboratory Safety Guidelines, see:

[www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidelines\\_labworkers.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidelines_labworkers.htm)

### Thurston County Public Health Actions:

Thurston County Public Health Incident Command was activated on Monday 4/27/09. We will remain activated daily as the public health emergency situation continues. I apologize for not being immediately available by phone and email. To reach Dr. Diana Yu during work hours, please contact Peggy Grenier at 360-867-2549. After work hours, you can reach me for a public health emergency by calling 911.

We participate in daily calls and briefings and may not be available to answer phones at the following times:

- 0800 – 0930 ICS briefing
- 1300 – 1400 Conference calls with Department of Health Communicable Disease Epidemiologists on surveillance issues
- 1600 – 1700 Conference calls between health officials from all 35 local health jurisdictions, tribes and DOH

### Communications from the Health Department

- It is urgent that you pay close attention to the guidance you receive each day as it may change.
- This is our primary way of providing information to the health care community.
- We are focusing on prevention and avoiding exposure
- The information on the Health Department website will be the most up to date and may be updated more than once a day.
- At the end of each work day, a CD Update is sent out by Dr. Yu to all health care providers via fax. It is usually sent to one fax number per office and we expect your office personnel to distribute as needed. Physicians who have requested email versions of the updates receive them also in the evenings.

April 30, 2009 Update # 7

- If you do not currently get your updates via email and wish to have it or have an email address change, please contact [greniep@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:greniep@co.thurston.wa.us) and send her your name, Practice location/Clinic Name, office phone number, fax number and email address you wish used.

Health department Swine flu info line 360-709-3080 is updated a few times a day.

Info for the public and health care providers about swine flu is available on our website [www.co.thurston.wa.us/health](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health)

Attached is a Counter Flyer created to help community partners route people to the most current information available from our Department about Swine Flu H1N1. The flyer can be placed on reception counters, in staff mailboxes, or emailed. It is available on our website.

#### Current Status Report:

World Health Organization has elevated the Swine Flu situation to **PANDEMIC PHASE 5** – novel virus with sustained human to human transmission.

- Please review your office Pandemic Preparedness Plan and stock up on the supplies like masks, hand sanitizers, tissues etc. you will need to keep your staff healthy and your office open.
- Please see CDC swine flu infection control & treatment recommendations at: [www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/recommendations.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/recommendations.htm)
- There are now 109 confirmed cases in the US in ten states with one death reported. The death was in a 2 yr Mexico citizen brought into Texas for health care.
- We do not have any confirmed cases in Washington State.
- There are tests pending at the State Lab. There are hundreds of cases pending investigation. By sometime next week, the state lab will be able to do the verification for swine flu at the state lab instead of sending it to CDC.
- The severity of the swine flu cases continues to be mild to moderate. Most of the confirmed cases are in individuals under the age of 18. There are now cases in persons with no known connection with travel to Mexico.

#### Community mitigation measures:

- Social distancing – staying away from people who are ill is strongly recommended
- School closures – the current plan for school closures is to contain cases. The plan is to close a school campus when there is a probable or confirmed case reported from the school. The recommendation by health officials in western and eastern Washington will be implemented when it is needed. We are working with the schools to monitor illness activity. It may be necessary to close schools if absenteeism meets threshold levels.
- Work or school exclusion – Strictly enforce keeping anyone who is ill from attending school, day care or work.
- Masks (preferably N 95) should be used when you are encountering a patient with respiratory symptoms.
- Patients with respiratory symptoms should use a mask or other barrier to decrease exposure to others.
- Washing hands and/or using hand sanitizer can prevent transmission.

Report all suspect cases to 24 hour recorded line at 360-786-5470.

# Need information about Swine Flu H1N1?

The Thurston County Health Department  
provides daily updates

Swine Flu H1N1 Public Information Line:  
**360-709-3080**

Swine Flu H1N1 Webpage:  
**[www.co.thurston.wa.us/health](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health)**

Health Department main phone number:  
**360-867-2500**



**Cover Your Cough  
Wash Your Hands Often  
Stay Home When You Are Sick**



Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department  
412 Lilly Road NE, Olympia, WA 98506