

April 27, 2009 Update # 4

## *Human Swine Flu Virus (SIV) Infections - Update # 4 PHARMACIES*

### Action Requested from Pharmacists:

Please be advised that the recommendations have been made to treat persons with swine flu with Tamiflu or Relenza. Please consider stocking up on antiviral medications as if it were the beginning of an influenza season. There is a plan to release the strategic national stockpile of antiviral medications but until it is available, we will be relying on the medications being available from local pharmacies.

World Health Organization has elevated the Swine Flu situation to PANDEMIC PHASE 4 – novel virus with sustained human to human transmission.

- 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)

## GUIDANCE FOR PATIENTS ABOUT SWINE FLU

### Patients and Travel to Mexico

There are no current recommendations to restrict school or work for persons without symptoms who come from Mexico or have recently returned from Mexico. We advise that patients monitor their temperature and for other signs and symptoms for 7 days after their return.

### Persons who have returned from Mexico in the last 7 days:

- Have no symptoms and no contact with ill persons – reassurance, ask them to watch for signs and symptoms and stay home if they become ill.
- Patients who have symptoms of fever (> 100 °F), cough and sore throat - should be asked to stay home, cover cough, wash your hands and avoid giving it to someone else.
- If swine flu is suspected, obtain a nasopharyngeal swab for testing for Influenza A
- If symptoms lasts more than 3 days and seem to be getting worse or if any of emergency symptoms show up, call your Doctor.

### Persons who have returned more than one week ago:

- Reassurance if they have not developed symptoms in last 7 days.
- If they had symptoms but have now recovered, no testing is indicated. If someone in their household was exposed and are now symptomatic, they need to be tested.

### Persons planning trips to Mexico:

- **Travel to Mexico at this time is not advised.** There is no current restriction on travel to other places in the USA with active cases, just an awareness to stay away from people who are ill.
- Severe swine flu cases are mostly in Mexico City because of the total number of cases. Transmission was likely at airports.

### What do I do if I suspect a case.

- Advise patients to cover their cough, wash their hands and stay home when ill.
- Perform a CLIA waived rapid influenza test, if available.



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- If test is positive, send patient (with mask on) to your regular laboratory for a nasopharyngeal swab for Influenza A.
- Call public health to report the suspect case (360)786-5470.

#### Who should be treated

- Patients with influenza like illness severe enough to need hospitalization should be treated.
- Preventive treatment should be considered for household contacts at risk of complications from influenza.
- Although Tamiflu is effective for treatment and prevention, pharmacies currently do not have a large amount of Tamiflu in stock. We have asked Pharmacies to increase their current stock.

#### Who should be tested:

- Persons hospitalized with severe respiratory illness (i.e., fever >37.8 [100°F] plus shortness of breath, hypoxia, or radiographic evidence of pneumonia) that may be due to influenza;
- Unexplained deaths in people less than 50 years of age that appear due to severe respiratory illness, respiratory failure, or pneumonia;
- Persons seen in emergency departments or outpatient settings with influenza-like illness (i.e., fever >37.8 [100°F] plus cough and/or sore throat) and one of the following risk factors:
  1. Travel in Mexico in the 7 days prior to illness onset
  2. Contact with a person influenza-like illness who had traveled to Mexico in the 7 days prior to their illness
  3. Contact with a confirmed or probable case of swine influenza.
- Obtaining laboratory sample:
  1. Obtain an nasopharyngeal specimen using a synthetic (not cotton or calcium alginate) swab, use personal protective equipment (N95 mask, goggles), place in viral transport medium and refrigerate
  2. If your office can perform a CLIA waived rapid test for influenza
  3. If the patient tests positive for influenza A, notify public health that you have a hospitalized case of severe respiratory illness due to influenza A and that you are shipping the sample to DOH Public Health Lab. (Contact Jeanie Knight at (360)754-3355 ext 6779 for assistance)

#### General guidance

Most healthy people recover from the flu without complications. If you get the flu:

- Stay home from work or school.
- Get lots of rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco.
- There are over-the-counter (OTC) medications to relieve the symptoms of the flu (but never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever).

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