

Dolores J. Gunn MD
Director

HEALTH ALERT: 2009 H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) Interim Guidelines for LTCF's

April 29, 2009

This is a rapidly evolving situation, and this alert provides interim guidance. The St. Louis County Department of Health will issue further guidance as more information becomes available.

The World Health Organization has raised the pandemic influenza alert level to five, meaning that the 2009 H1N1 influenza (swine flu) virus has widespread human-to-human transmission.

There appears to be human-to-human spread of these viruses. Patients or staff presenting with influenza-like illness (fever with cough or sore throat) should be advised to stay in their patient room. If a patient or staff member presents with influenza-like illness AND has traveled to an area where swine flu is confirmed or contact to a known case please contact the Saint Louis County Department of Health at 314-615-1636.

Case Definition:

- Fever of ≥ 37.8 degrees C (100 degrees F) plus cough or sore throat
AND
- Travel to an area where swine flu is confirmed or contact to a known case

How to Stop the Spread:

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- 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. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid face-to-face contact less than 3 feet away, especially sick individuals.
- Follow your pandemic plans
- If you get sick with influenza-like illness, CDC recommends that you **stay home** from daycare and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- If your patient is sick with influenza-like illness
 - Use droplet and contact precautions
 - Have the patient wear a mask when moving about the facility
 - Staff should wear a mask and eye protection when performing patient procedures

Additional resources for the latest information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

<http://www.stlouisco.com/doh/>

http://www.dhss.mo.gov/BT_Response/_SwineFlu09.html