



Public Health Message

from the Fort Wayne-AlLEN County Department of Health

Date: April 30, 2009

To: Daycare providers

I would like to share some information about the current swine flu outbreak. The Influenza A (H1N1)-North American/Human flu (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza that regularly cause outbreaks of influenza among pigs. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans, however, human infections with swine flu do occur, and cases of human-to-human spread of swine flu viruses has been documented. This virus has been identified globally and in the United States. While there has been a case in Indiana, no cases have been found in Allen County as of yet.

Spread of this virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. The symptoms are also identical to seasonal flu – high fever, dry cough, headache, muscle aches and occasionally sore throat or diarrhea.

There is no vaccine for this virus as of yet. The virus is treatable with antivirals, but they must be started within 48 hours of the development of symptoms. This makes prevention with good public health techniques very important.

Below you will find a list of recommendations put forth by the Indiana State Department of Health. For more information: http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/ISDH_SwineChildCareProviders.doc

Swine Influenza A (H1N1) Information for Child Care Providers

For child care providers, it would be prudent to

- First and most importantly, remind parents and enforce policies for having ill children stay at home during their illness.
- In addition, remind and inform workers not to come to work while ill.
- A child may be infectious for up to 10 days after illness onset with influenza while adults are generally infectious for 5-7 days.
- Review their plans for responding to a pandemic and make sure they are up to date.
- Know local/state plans for child care in the event of a mild or severe pandemic. This information may be available from state or local health authorities, child care licensing agencies or resource and referral agencies.
- Develop and implement a system to track illness and absence due to illness among children and staff if one is not already in place. The system should be simple and easy to maintain but should record the number of persons with various illnesses (e.g. respiratory, diarrhea, rash) by day or at least by week. (see Caring for Our Children Standards 3.001 and 3.002 for information on how to do this <http://nrckids.org/CFOC/PDFVersion/Chapter%203.pdf>)
- Review and implement CDC Guidelines and Recommendations for Preventing the Spread of Influenza (the Flu) in Child Care Settings: Guidance for Administrators, Care Providers, and Other Staff, (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/childcaresettings.htm>)

- Make sure staff are familiar with the above guidelines and that they are being followed in your program. Remind child care staff to clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces within the facility.
- Provide information to parents on steps that they could take to prevent flu. Please feel free to distribute or post the attached posters. For color versions please visit our website (<http://www.fighttheflu.org/posters-flyers-and-other-materials.html>)
- Monitor the postings on the CDC web site about this virus to see if child care facilities should begin preparing for possible closure or changes in operation (www.cdc.gov/swineflu). It is important to remember that daycares will need to close at the same time that the public/private schools area closed.
- Contact your local public health department if you have questions or suspected cases.
- Review your facilities emergency preparedness plans and consult with state and/or local health department's pandemic plans, particularly if the number of cases escalates dramatically.

For more information on: Influenza A (H1N1)-North American/Human flu (swine flu), please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

Thank you for your assistance in keeping our community safe and healthy!
Deborah A. McMahan, MD
Health Commissioner