



County of Erie

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HEALTH ADVISORY #242-First Responders UPDATED -June 12, 2009 HEALTH ADVISORY: NOVEL INFLUENZA A H1N1 (SWINE FLU) VIRUS UPDATE

Please distribute immediately to First Responders and Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Staff.

1. Background

The Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) received confirmation from the Wadsworth Laboratory of a positive case of Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu). The child presented to the family pediatrician on May 5th with a fever of 102°, body aches, chest congestion, and sore throat. The child was treated as an outpatient with Tamiflu® and is no longer symptomatic. The patient had no known epidemiological link.

The ECDOH has confirmed additional cases throughout the County. More detail is available on the Erie County Web Site at http://cms.erie.gov/tiki-download_file.php?fileId=39.

2. First Responder Guidance for Assessing Patient Contacts

Assessment

Because of the confirmation of multiple cases, patients in Erie County with **fever $\geq 100^\circ$ AND either a cough OR runny nose OR nasal congestion OR sore throat** are now considered *suspect* cases regardless of any other epidemiological link. Patients with uncomplicated Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) disease have also experienced chills, headache, shortness of breath, myalgias (muscle aches), arthralgias (joint aches), fatigue, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, it is important to note that most cases outside of Mexico continue to be mild. Of importance, limited laboratory testing continues to reveal more of human influenza A cases than Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) infection.

3. Interim Guidance for Infection Control

Due to accumulating evidence that Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) is comparable to seasonal influenza in its spectrum of illness and transmission pattern and does not appear to be causing unusual mortality compared to seasonal influenza, NYSDOH is now recommending that infection control measures for Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) be similar to those

taken for typical seasonal influenza. However, since Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) is a different virus, its clinical and epidemiologic features are still being assessed, and these recommendations are therefore subject to change. No effective vaccine has been developed to date, and it is assumed that much, if not all, of the population is susceptible to the virus. It is also possible that this virus may become more virulent in the future, in which case these recommendations may be revised.

Efforts to maximize adherence to recommendations for seasonal influenza, including meticulous respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, should be practiced in all settings.

Agency Chiefs and Administrators:

- Notify all members and staff of updated guidance.
- Monitor emails, fax transmissions, and other communications intended to update responders.
- Monitor news reports and government resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov), NYS Department of Health (www.nyhealth.gov) and the Erie County Department of Health (http://www.erie.gov/swine_flu.asp)

Direct Care EMS Providers:

- Request additional information from EMS Dispatch if needed when responding to respiratory, sick person, and fever related calls.
- Perform initial interview of all patients from at least 2 meters (6.5 feet) away to determine if personal protective equipment precautions are necessary.
- A surgical facemask should be placed on all patients with febrile respiratory illness if a non-rebreather oxygen mask has not been applied.
- Providers who will have close contact (less than 2 meters or 6.5 feet), including examining or providing direct medical care for patients meeting the suspect case definition above, should wear a surgical facemask and disposable non-sterile gloves.
- ***Routine use of N-95 Respirators is no longer recommended unless an aerosol-generating procedure (e.g. intubation, extubation, suctioning) will be performed.*** During those procedures, a fit-tested N-95 (or better) respirator and eye protection (goggles or face shield) disposable non-sterile gloves and gown should be worn.
- Alert the receiving hospital personnel of the possibility of an infectious patient as early as possible; and hold suspected infectious patients in the ambulance until their destination in the hospital is known unless this will compromise care to critical patients.
- Use PPE in accordance with manufacturer guidelines and place used PPE materials in a biohazard bag for appropriate disposal.
- Maintain strict adherence to hand hygiene by washing with soap and water or using hand sanitizer immediately after removing gloves and other equipment and after any contact with respiratory secretions.
- Perform a thorough cleaning with an approved disinfectant of the stretcher and all equipment that has come in contact with or been within 2 meters (6.5 feet) of a potentially infected patient. Upon completion of the call follow CDC interim guidelines for cleaning EMS transport vehicles (www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/healthcare/cleaning_ems.html).

Routine cleaning and disinfection strategies used during influenza seasons can be applied to the environmental management of swine influenza. More information can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/gl_environmentinfection.html.

4. Interim Guidance for Exclusion of Ill Providers

The ECDOH has developed the following guidelines for exclusion of individuals from work, social events, mass gatherings, etc. Please note that these guidelines are in draft form and subject to change based on guidance from the CDC, the characteristics of Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) in Erie County, and comments and feedback received from educational, healthcare, and community partners. However, please consider these revised guidelines for immediate implementation until further notice.

- **Seven (7) Day Exclusion** - persons are to be excluded from school, work, and community activities for 7 days or 24 hours after all ILI* symptoms subside, whichever is longer, if they:
 - Have had a positive Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) test
 - OR
 - Have had a positive Influenza A test
 - OR
 - Have ILI* symptoms and are a member of a household in which another person has had a positive Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) test
 - OR
 - Have ILI* symptoms and are a member of a household in which another person has had a positive Influenza A test
- **Twenty-four (24) Hour Exclusion** - all persons with ILI* symptoms who do not meet any criteria for seven-day exclusion are to be excluded from school, work, and community activities for 24 hours after symptoms subside.

*ILI symptoms include a fever $\geq 100^{\circ}$ F AND a cough AND/OR a sore throat

5. Continuing Guidance

The NYSDOH will provide updated guidance as additional information and CDC recommendations become available. Updated information is frequently posted on the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/investigation.htm>. Several additional CDC guidance documents can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance/>. Erie County is also posting updated guidance at: http://www.erie.gov/swine_flu.asp as it becomes available.

These procedures should remain in effect until further notification by the Erie County Department of Health. Please direct any questions to the Division of Emergency Medical Services at ems@erie.gov or call 716-681-6070.

Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary