

State of Montana DPHHS HAN UPDATE

Distributed via the DPHHS Health Alert Network (HAN) System

Monday, April 27, 2009 1:10 PM

DPHHS Health Alert Hotline 1-800-701-5769

Visit the DPHHS Health Alert Network Website at www.han.mt.gov

DPHHS Contact Information: Jim Murphy 444-4016

DPHHS recommends you DO NOT forward this HAN message on to your local HAN contacts.

DPHHS Recommendations:

We are asking that you do not forward this information at this time.

Attached for your information are copies of a press release to be issued by DPHHS this afternoon and a guidance piece for laboratories that has been distributed by the Montana Public Health Laboratory. There is no need to redistribute these items at this time.

DPHHS has scheduled a conference call for Public Health Departments at 2:30 PM, Monday, April 27th. We will provide a general update on plans being made in the various DPHHS programs to address swine influenza and answer questions.

To join the conference call dial: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX and enter XXXXXXXX for the pass code.

=====
=====
The goal of Montana's Health Alert Network is to transmit information to local public health authorities as quickly as possible, and assign a suitable priority to the message that is sensitive to the impact of a health-related event providing information relative to the public health and safety of Montanans. For questions or comments relative to Montana's HAN system you may contact the DPHHS HAN Coordinator, Gerry Wheat at <mailto:gwheat@mt.gov>

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

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; unlikely to require immediate action.

You have received this message based upon the information contained within our emergency notification data base. If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would like us to use please notify us as soon as possible by e-mail at hhshan@mt.gov <mailto:hhshan@mt.gov>

=====
=====

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)
Submission of Specimens for Swine Influenza Testing **4/27/2009**

If you have any questions, please call the MT DPHHS Public Health Laboratory (MTPHL) at 800-821-7284.

Please share this information with your local health care providers.

- **Only individuals with Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) should be tested**
 - **Fever \geq 100°F (37.8°C) AND**
 - **Cough or Sore Throat**
 - **The absence of a known cause other than Influenza**
- Influenza Testing
 - Specimens for Swine Influenza testing may continue to be screened locally with a Rapid Influenza Test. Swine Influenza is an Influenza A H1N1 virus. However, performance of all the different rapid tests for the detection of Swine Influenza is unknown at this time.
 - **Refer all specimens** from all patients with ILI to the MTPHL for additional testing. We are interested in identifying all potential Influenza A cases.
- Specimen Collection
 - Specimens should be collected within 3 days of onset of symptoms. After that time, the viral shedding is reduced, and may no longer be detectable, depending on the assay.
 - Respiratory Specimens (nasopharyngeal, throat, nasal washings) should be submitted in M4 Viral Transport Media in a cold condition. Swabs should be synthetic (Dacron, nylon) and have a metal or plastic shaft. Cotton swabs and wooden sticks are inhibitory to Influenza Viruses.
 - M4 viral transport media can be stored at room temperature before specimen collection. However, after the specimen has been introduced into the transport media, the specimen must be stored at refrigerator temperature (NOT frozen), until transported to the MTPHL in a cold condition.
 - Specimen can be transported via courier or the mail as a Biologic Substance, Category B, and should be received at the MTPHL laboratory within 48 hours of collection.
- Requisition Form
 - Order Influenza Surveillance. This will insure that costs will not be passed on to the patient or provider.
 - Write in the "Comments" field that Swine Influenza is suspected.
 - In addition to the standard demographic information, please include the results of Rapid Influenza Testing on the requisition form, if tested.
- Turn Around Time
 - Specimens received in the MTPHL by 8 a.m. should have PCR testing, including type (A vs B) and subtyping (H1 vs H3) completed by 5 p.m. on the same day.
 - Viral cultures will also be performed and the expected turn around time for a positive culture is 5 – 7 days.
- Biosafety
 - All specimen manipulations, including performance of rapid influenza tests, should be done inside a biosafety cabinet (BSC).
 - For more detailed biosafety information, see the CDC guidance below, which can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidelines_labworkers.htm

Swine Influenza A (H1N1) Virus Biosafety Guidelines for Laboratory Workers

This guidance is for laboratory workers who may be processing or performing diagnostic testing on clinical specimens from patients with suspected swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection, or performing viral isolation.

Diagnostic laboratory work on clinical samples from patients who are suspected cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection should be conducted in a BSL2 laboratory. All sample manipulations should be done inside a biosafety cabinet (BSC).

Viral isolation on clinical specimens from patients who are suspected cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection should be performed in a BSL2 laboratory with BSL3 practices (enhanced BSL2 conditions).

Additional precautions include:

- Recommended Personal Protective Equipment (based on site specific risk assessment)
- Respiratory protection – fit-tested N95 respirator or higher level of protection.
- Shoe covers
- Closed-front gown
- Double gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shields)

Waste

- All waste disposal procedures should be followed as outlined in your facility standard laboratory operating procedures.

Appropriate disinfectants

- 70% Ethanol
- 5% Lysol
- 10% Bleach

All personnel should self monitor for fever and any symptoms. Symptoms of swine influenza infection include cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, runny nose, and muscle aches. Any illness should be reported to your supervisor immediately.

For personnel who had unprotected exposure or a known breach in personal protective equipment to clinical material or live virus from a confirmed case of swine influenza A (H1N1), antiviral chemoprophylaxis with zanamivir or oseltamivir for 7 days after exposure can be considered.

For additional information, please see: antiviral treatment and chemoprophylaxis guidance.

[Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories \(BMBL\) 5th Edition Section IV Laboratory Biosafety Level Criteria](#)

- Links to non-federal organizations are provided solely as a service to our users. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CDC or the federal government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links.

NOTE: MEDIA CONFERENCE CALL TODAY AT 3:30 P.M.

Due to the high number of media inquiries related to the swine influenza outbreak, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) will host a media conference call today, Monday, April 27, 2009 at 3:30 p.m. **Participants can call 1-866-398-2885. The call passcode is 8339961.** There will also be an opportunity for on-camera interviews with DPHHS staff following the conference call at approximately 4 p.m. at 111 North Sanders in Room 306 in Helena.

**NEWS FROM THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

For immediate release

April 27, 2009

Contact: Bonnie Barnard, Communicable Disease Surveillance, DPHHS, 406-444-0273
Jon Ebelt, Public Information Officer, DPHHS, 406-444-0936

No Swine Influenza Cases Identified in Montana

State health officials are monitoring closely

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) announced today that in response to reported cases of swine influenza in other parts of the country the state is participating in a national effort to be prepared in the event the situation worsens.

As a precautionary measure, a portion of Montana's allotment of antiviral medication and personal protective equipment from the national stockpile will be moved to storage in the state. Other states have taken similar steps. "This is a situation where we need to be prepared in the event this medication or equipment is needed in the immediate future," said DPHHS state medical officer Dr. Steve Helgerson.

As of Monday, state health officials confirm no cases of swine influenza have been identified in Montana.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a total of 40 cases of swine influenza infection have been confirmed in five different states including California, Kansas, New York, Ohio and Texas. Only one of the United States patients needed to be hospitalized.

In addition, several cases have been identified in Canada, and there are an undetermined number of cases, some who have died, in Mexico.

Health officials are working closely with the physicians throughout the state to identify influenza-like illness. "We are continuing influenza surveillance and, especially since seasonal influenza is waning, we are asking doctors who see patients with influenza-like symptoms, to collect a specimen and send it to the DPHHS laboratory for testing," Helgerson said.

Specimens collected will undergo testing at the state Public Health Laboratory in Helena for certain known, or 'typeable', influenza strains. However, if the test results show an unknown strain, then the specimen would be sent to the CDC for further testing to determine whether or not it is swine influenza.

"The DPHHS state laboratory will play an important role in the process," Helgerson said. "We are monitoring the situation very closely."

Infection with the current swine influenza virus is being passed from person to person. In the past swine influenza viruses have been transmitted from pigs to humans, but the viruses are not spread by food.

Helgerson said no vaccine is yet available to protect against this infection. However, the same precautions recommended to help limit the spread of seasonal influenza also apply to the swine influenza, including:

- 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 hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

The symptoms of swine influenza are the same as the symptoms of seasonal influenza in humans and include: Fever greater than 100 degrees F, sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills, headache and body aches, and fatigue. Some of the U.S. cases have also reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine influenza.

Severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine influenza infection outside the U.S. Like seasonal influenza, swine influenza may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

For more information about the swine influenza investigation go to the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm>.

Or visit the DPHHS website at www.dphhs.mt.gov.

Jon Ebelt
Public Information Officer
Montana Dept. of Public Health

and Human Services
P.O. Box 4210
Helena, MT 59602
jebelt@mt.gov
Office: (406) 444-0936
Cell: (406) 461-3757