



Hays County, Texas

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Information for the News Media

For Immediate Release May 1, 2009

Hays County Personal Health Department Continues Ramping Preparedness for Potential Flu Cases

-No known cases reported to date in Hays County-

-AgriLife Extension/Texas A&M provides information for agricultural producers-

Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, TX – The Hays County Personal Health Department continues to support local medical offices, including private physicians, clinics, care centers and educational institutions, to ensure preparedness for the possibility of influenza A H1N1 (swine flu) in Hays County. To date, no known cases have been reported in Hays County.

“Area doctors have been sending in cultures to the Department of State Health Services based on results of rapid flu tests they’ve given, but we have not gotten any results back yet that indicate H1N1 flu,” said Priscilla Hargraves, director of the Hays County Personal Health Department. “We’ve been distributing culture kits to area medical offices as we’ve received requests, and are working with a number of medical offices so that they can sign up to receive culture kits directly from the State. Our department is meeting in person and via email with medical providers in the County to address any issues that may come up, but so far the process has been running smoothly.”

Hargraves suggests that persons who are not experiencing any symptoms but are concerned to call the State Department of Health Services toll-free line at 1-888-777-5320. Persons who feel they have symptoms should contact their regular physician or a local clinic if possible rather than go directly to an emergency room, as many ERs are experiencing increased numbers of persons seeking counsel and treatment.

“Practicing common-sense measures is the key to helping to prevent the flu from spreading,” Hargraves said. “Proper and frequent hand washing and staying home from school or work if you feel ill can go a long way toward keeping the flu virus contained.”

The following information is provided by the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

There are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy.

- 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.

What are the signs and symptoms of H1N1 (swine flu) in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How does H1N1 flu spread?

Spread of this swine influenza A (H1N1) 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.

How can someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

The Texas Department of State Health Services has a hotline staffed to answer questions from people about H1N1 flu at 1-888-777-5320, and the agency's Web page at [Department of Health Services H1N1 Flu Information](#) includes updated statistics, H1N1 flu information and links to the CDC. The CDC website is at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

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Note to Editors: Attached is a brochure produced by AgriLife Extension/Texas A&M System, courtesy of the Hays County Extension Office, which gives general flu prevention information as well as agricultural-specific information to help prevent the spread of H1N1 flu, in English and Spanish.

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