



NEWS RELEASE

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GREENWICH HEALTH DEPARTMENT MONITORS SWINE INFLUENZA “SWINE FLU”

As the local lead public health agency, the Greenwich Department of Health announced today that it will work closely with state public health officials and local health care providers, including Greenwich Hospital, to monitor cases of the “swine flu” outbreak that have been identified in children and adults in 5 states, including 8 confirmed cases in Queens, New York. **There are no confirmed cases in Connecticut.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed a total of 20 cases of swine flu in the United States as of April 26, 2009. Other states that have confirmed cases, besides New York, include California (7), Kansas (2), Ohio (1) and Texas (2). According to the CDC, seasonal influenza activity continues to decline in the US; however, there could be cases up until late May.

On April 27, 2009, New York City health officials confirmed that eight (8) students of more than one hundred (100) students at the St. Francis Preparatory School in Queens tested positive for swine influenza A (H1N1) by the CDC in Atlanta. All affected students have experienced only mild symptoms with many of the students improving. A similar virus has recently caused many deaths in Mexico, but the US confirmed cases have been mild and all patients have recovered without treatment. “It is extremely important for us to monitor this outbreak carefully and advise all residents on measures to avoid getting the flu. Although there has been no citywide increase of illness in New York City or other cases or clusters identified, person-to-person transmission has been responsible for its spread,” stated Director of Health Caroline C. Baisley. “We will work closely with physician’s offices, the Board of Education school nursing staff, nursing homes, freestanding medical facilities, Greenwich Hospital and other health care providers to monitor any activity in Greenwich. At this time, the state of Connecticut reports no swine flu cases in the state; however, this situation may change at any time. As always, the Department of Health will inform and guide the public “ said Director of Health Caroline C. Baisley.

Swine Flu is a respiratory infection caused by influenza type A viruses that regularly cause outbreaks of influenza in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can occur. Human cases typically involve people who have had direct contact with pigs, but likely person-to-person transmission of the swine flu viruses can happen. Swine flu is not transmitted to humans through food and the symptoms of swine flu in people appear to be similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu. The following are typical symptoms:

- Fever or feverishness
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Influenza-like illness: fever >100° F **plus** cough **or** sore throat

Some people have reported other symptoms such as diarrhea and vomiting as well. In addition, it is also unlikely that the seasonal flu vaccine provides any protection against the swine flu virus. People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possibly for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially young children, might be contagious for longer periods.

Residents who begin to experience flu symptoms should contact their health care provider for instruction. Those who become ill will most likely be asked to stay home until the illness is resolved, unless severe symptoms are experienced. Those people, including children who display difficulty breathing or other severe symptoms listed below, should seek health care and treatment immediately.

Severe Symptoms in

- Fast breathing or difficulty breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Irritable and not wanting to be held
- Return of flu-like symptoms with fever and a worse cough
- Fever with a rash

Severe Symptoms in Adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Influenza testing and treatment with antiviral medications will be determined by your health care provider after evaluating patient flu symptoms, exposure to the swine flu virus infection and conditions which increase the risk of severe influenza infection.

The most effective way to lower your risk of getting the flu is to:

- Wash your hands with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective
- Cover your mouth when you sneeze and cough using a tissue or your sleeve if needed. All tissues are to be discarded in a waste paper basket.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick and do not go back until 24-48 hours after the illness has resolved.
- Avoid close contact with those who are ill

For More Information on Swine Flu

- Contact the Greenwich Department of Health at (203) 622-7838 or at www.greenwichct.org
- Connecticut Department of Public Health: www.ct.gov/dph or call 2-1-1
- Greenwich Hospital Hotline (203) 863-4455 at www.greenhosp.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

General Information

www.cdc.gov

www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general_info.htm

www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/index.htm

Swine Flu Case Definition

www.cdc.gov/swineflu/casedef_swineflu.htm

Swine Flu Infection Control and Patient Care

www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidelines_infection_control.htm

Travel Advisories

www.cdc.gov/travel