



INYO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH BRIEF

A Division of Health & Human Services
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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Novel H1N1 Influenza Update – July 6, 2009

Today, Dr. Rick Johnson, Health Officer for Inyo County, reported the first laboratory confirmed case of “swine flu” or “novel H1N1 influenza” in Inyo County. The individual was not hospitalized, and has completely recovered.

This finding emphasizes the fact that the “swine flu” bug is thriving in our community, and will likely be here all summer. There are undoubtedly more cases already here in Inyo County. Cases of the H1N1 influenza have now been identified in over 100 countries, with the numbers of laboratory-confirmed cases approaching 100,000. It is estimated that for every laboratory confirmed case, there are at least 20 other cases that have not sought medical care and have not been tested.

As we in public health continue to monitor the situation worldwide, we are actively planning our response for the fall. We will be stepping up our surveillance activities once school starts (only 7 weeks away!!). In addition, we anticipate the availability of an H1N1 influenza vaccine, arriving later this fall, sometime after the seasonal flu vaccine, and targeted to a younger population. We hope that we will not have a surge of sick individuals in our community, but planning is actively underway to deal with that possibility also.

With the first confirmed case of H1N1 in Inyo County, Dr. Johnson wishes to remind everyone to take common-sense steps to prevent the flu from spreading using the following common sense practices:

1. Persons with influenza-like illness, fever with either cough or sore throat should stay home and refrain from attending any public gathering for 7 days after the start of the illness or at least 24 hours after symptoms have stopped.
2. Persons who are at risk of complications (for example persons with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women and individuals considerably overweight) should consider their risk of exposure when attending public gatherings where the virus may be present, if they are concerned.
3. Cover your cough and sneezes. Cough into a disposable tissue or into the fold of your arm if a tissue is not available.
4. Wash hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer, especially after the use of tissue, cough or sneezing.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
6. Keep your distance of 6 feet from people who are coughing.
7. Avoid sharing personal items such as eating/drinking utensils, toothbrushes and towels, especially with ill persons.

Remember spread the word not the virus. These simple tips can prevent or limit your risk to getting the flu or giving it to others. If you have any questions, please contact Inyo County Health & Human Services, Public Health at 873-7868.