

Richland County

Health and Human Services

Randy Jacquet, Director

Date: April 27, 2009

To: Richland County Media

From: Marianne Stanek
Richland County Health & Human Services Public Health

Re: Swine Influenza Outbreak

In light of the recent outbreak of swine influenza (flu), Richland County Health & Human Services Public Health is offering an update on the current situation and some additional information on swine influenza to area residents.

As of this time, there are 40 confirmed cases of swine flu in the United States. Confirmed cases are in California, Texas, Kansas, Ohio and New York. There are currently no confirmed cases in Wisconsin.

State and local health departments are following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for the prevention, detection and treatment of swine influenza, and further updates will occur as more information becomes available.

Swine influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs that is caused by a type A influenza virus that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. The virus causing the current outbreak in humans is termed a “novel” or new virus, which means that it has not been seen in humans before. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have determined that this particular virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. Although it is not known how easily the virus spreads, it is thought that it spreads in the same way as seasonal influenza—through coughing or sneezing, or touching something that has been contaminated with the virus and then touching your mouth or nose. Swine flu is not spread by eating pork or pork products. Infected people may be able to infect others 1 day before symptoms develop to up to 7 or more days after becoming sick.

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal influenza: fever of greater than 100 degrees, cough, sore throat, myalgia (body aches), headaches, chills, and fatigue. There appears to be increased reports of diarrhea and vomiting with swine flu. Like seasonal influenza, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

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To protect yourself from getting the flu:

- Wash your hands. Hand washing is the single most important thing in preventing the spread of any infection.
- Try to stay in good health
- Stay physically active
- Manage your stress
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Eat nutritious foods
- Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- 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 hand sanitizers are also effective
- Try to avoid touching your eyes, nose, or face—germs spread this way
- Try to avoid contact with sick people
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick to avoid infecting others

There are also many helpful resources included on the CDC and Wisconsin Division of Public Health's Pandemic Flu website.

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

DPH: <http://www.pandemic.wisconsin.gov>

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