

NEWS RELEASE
APRIL 27, 2009

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TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: Human Swine Flu Virus (SIV) Infections

Mason County Public Health is in close contact with Washington State Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding swine influenza in parts of the United States, Canada and Mexico. The department is working closely with health care providers to investigate cases of pneumonia and influenza to see if they are due to this new infection, especially in people who traveled to Mexico or other affected areas. There are no known cases of swine influenza in people in Washington at this time.

Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by a type A influenza virus. Viruses that cause swine flu do not normally infect humans, although rare human infections with swine flu have occurred. The swine influenza virus that is being investigated now is different than the virus that causes illness in pigs and is not being transmitted from pigs to humans, but appears to be transmitted person-to-person. **Human symptoms for this new type of swine flu are similar to the symptoms of regular human influenza that happens every year. Those include fever, cough and sore throat. In addition, fatigue, lack of appetite, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea have been reported.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that the swine flu virus causing mild illness in some states is the same strain as the virus causing an outbreak of respiratory illness among humans in some areas of Mexico. As of April 26, 2009, swine flu infections have been confirmed in people living in five states: California; Texas; Kansas; New York City and Ohio. No deaths due to this virus have been found in the United States. (See CDC website for current information - www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm.) Cases have also been confirmed in Canada. Swine flu infections have been documented in Mexico, but it is not yet known if all of the fatal or hospitalized respiratory illness cases are actually due to this swine flu. This is being investigated.

Although there are no known cases in Washington State, precautions should be taken to avoid transmitting respiratory illnesses. This new "swine flu virus" is transmitted person-to-person when people cough and sneeze, spreading germs through the air, or on to surfaces that others can come in contact with. Infection occurs when the virus gets into the airways and lungs. As with any infectious disease that is spread through the human respiratory system, Mason County Public Health recommends the following precautions:

- 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 frequently, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective;
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people;
- If you get sick, stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

You can not get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F kills bacteria and viruses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a travelers' health notice for Mexico and states where there have been swine influenza cases. This is to inform travelers that an outbreak of respiratory illness is occurring and that precautions should be taken. Health officials are not recommending people avoid travel at this time. Travelers should follow the same precautionary measures that are recommended to protect against seasonal influenza – frequent hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding large crowds and staying home when ill. For more information about the CDC health notice and travel precautions go to <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm#travel>

If you have recently been to Mexico or affected areas in the U.S. and have symptoms of influenza such as fever, cough, and sore throat, you should contact your health care provider to discuss your symptoms. Make sure to tell your health care professional about your travel history. **There are effective medicines to treat all human influenza viruses and this new swine influenza virus.**

For more information about the swine flu virus, visit the Mason County web site <http://www.co.mason.wa.us/> or call the Centers for Disease Control hotline at **1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)**. If you have flu-like symptoms and would like to speak to a public health nurse, contact Mason County Public Health 360-427-9670 ext. 400, or from North Mason 360-275-4467 ext. 400.