



# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

POST OFFICE BOX 962, 1080 EMELINE AVENUE SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962  
(831) 454-4000 FAX: (831) 454-4488 TDD: (831) 454-4123

PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

### Press Release

**For Immediate Release:**

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**Contact: Dinah Phillips**

**Phone: 831-454-3408**

**Email: [Dinah.Phillips@co.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:Dinah.Phillips@co.santa-cruz.ca.us)**

The United States is facing a rapidly evolving situation of an epidemic of a novel strain of swine influenza virus. Internationally, cases have been confirmed in Canada and New Zealand. The World Health Organization (WHO) has raised the Pandemic Alert level to Phase 4, which is characterized by verified human-to-human transmission. In Phase 4, transmission is sufficient to cause community-level outbreaks and marks a significant shift in the risk for a pandemic.

As of Monday, April 27, 2009, eleven California residents have been diagnosed with swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection out of a total of at least 44 cases reported in the U.S. Five cases are residents of San Diego County, five are residents of Imperial County and one is a resident in Sacramento County. Thus far, there have been no deaths associated with this outbreak in the U.S. There are no known pig exposures in any of these cases. As of 4/27, no cases have been identified in Santa Cruz County.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are working closely with state and local health departments to identify cases of swine influenza throughout the U.S. The CDC is also coordinating their efforts with the World Health Organization and Mexican health officials. Additional cases have been identified in Texas, Kansas, Ohio, New York City and in Mexico. The CDC is recommending that clinicians consider a diagnosis of swine influenza in patients who have a high fever and respiratory symptoms of coughing and sore throat and who either have been in contact with persons with confirmed swine flu or who have traveled to Mexico or one of the five states which have reported cases. The Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, Public Health Division, is working with community healthcare providers to enhance testing of people with flu-like symptoms and a travel history to Mexico and/or exposure to possible cases of swine influenza. Public Health has activated its Departmental Operations Center to coordinate its response to this public health threat, which includes enhanced surveillance, increased laboratory testing, and consultation with health care providers on treatment and prophylaxis.

### Swine Influenza

The current situation suggests that this strain of swine influenza is transmitted human-to-human. Symptoms include fever  $>100^{\circ}$  F ( $37.8^{\circ}$  C) and a cough and/or a sore throat, lethargy, lack of appetite, and muscle pain. Vomiting and diarrhea can also occur. Swine influenza is **not** transmitted by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. This particular strain of swine influenza is susceptible to the antivirals, oseltamivir and zanamivir, but resistant to amantadine and rimantidine.

## **Protective Steps**

“Our community’s response to this public health threat is a shared responsibility for all community members, “ says Dr. Poki Namkung, Health Officer for Santa Cruz County. She further states that, “If we all take the proper precautions, we can severely limit the number of people who may become ill.” To that end, county health officials recommend the following:

1. Stay home when you are sick. This will prevent others from catching your illness. Only seek medical care if you have ILI symptoms of fever, lethargy, muscle pains, coughing and sore throat and have traveled to an affected area and/or have been exposed to a possibly infected person within the last 7 days. Call your health care provider and let them know of your possible exposure. Wear a mask before you enter your provider’s office. Avoid close contact with others as much as possible.
2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
3. Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.
4. Wash your hands frequently.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

## **Travel Information**

The CDC has recommended that all non-essential travel to Mexico should be avoided. If you must travel to Mexico, check the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for information on how to protect yourself from influenza.

**Additional Resources:** For more information on swine influenza, please visit our website at [www.santacruzhealth.org](http://www.santacruzhealth.org) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Residents may also call our information line at 831-454-4343.