

Bergen County Department of Health Services Update for May 20, 2009 regarding Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Influenza (previously called Swine Flu)

The daily H1N1 (Swine) Influenza updates are being discontinued by the Bergen County Department of Health Services (BCDHS) at this time. If circumstances change we will provide updated information. Please continue to pay attention to the points below.

- The numbers of confirmed cases of H1N1 flu will continue to increase as more laboratory testing is done and the CDC catches up with the backlog of testing on some of the milder cases.
- There are now confirmed cases in many counties in New Jersey, including Bergen County. The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) continues to update New Jersey's H1N1 case count on a daily basis on its H1N1 Influenza site -- <http://nj.gov/health/er/h1n1>.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), although Mexico is believed to be the source of the outbreak, most new cases of H1N1 flu in the U.S. are now being caused by person-to-person transmission and not some link to Mexico. It is thought that novel influenza A (H1N1) flu spreads in the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread; mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are ill with the virus.
- The H1N1 flu seems to be following a similar course to seasonal influenza with some important differences.
 - Unlike seasonal flu, a higher percentage of cases seem to be experiencing vomiting and diarrhea.
 - Unlike seasonal flu, most of the cases of H1N1 flu seem to be occurring in young adults, rather than the very young or the elderly.
- **The cases of H1N1 in the United States to date have generally been mild.**
- The NJ Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) continues to remain in contact with, and work closely with, the CDC and local health departments.
- Bergen County Department of Health Services has increased its influenza surveillance activity and continues to remain in communication with the area hospitals, local municipalities, other health departments and the NJDHSS.
- CDC's Travel Health Warning recommending against non-essential travel to Mexico, in effect since April 27, 2009, has now been downgraded to a Travel Health Precaution. Log onto www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu for further information.
- You **can not** catch H1N1 flu from eating properly handled and cooked pork or pork products.

- There are steps you can take now to decrease your chances of catching the flu:
 - Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water.
 - Avoid touching your face, nose and eyes.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with tissues and dispose of them properly.
 - Cough into your sleeve, if a tissue is not available, not into your hands or the air.
 - Stay home if you are sick and keep your children home if they are sick.

- Call your health care provider if you have symptoms of the flu such as:
 - Fever greater than 100 degrees F.
 - Lack of appetite.
 - Cough.
 - Fatigue.
 - Headache and/or body aches.
 - Sore throat.
 - And sometimes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

- The CDC recommends the use of the prescription antiviral drugs oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu ®) or zanamivir (brand name Relenza ®) for the treatment of infection with H1N1 influenza. These antiviral drugs can make the illness milder and prevent serious flu complications. They are primarily only being recommended for hospitalized patients and patients at higher risk for flu complications. They work best if started within 2 days of symptom onset.

- **Be Prepared!** There is still uncertainty about how this novel virus will behave in the future. Take this opportunity to review and update your family emergency plans. For information on planning log onto www.pandemicflu.gov or www.redcross.org. These sites contain information in a variety of languages.

- Stay informed. Listen to reliable and trustworthy sources of information on radio and TV, visit www.bergenhealth.org , www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu (formerly www.cdc.gov/swineflu) and www.nj.gov/health on the web.

- Updates will be posted on the Bergen County Health and Information Line at 201-225-7000 when/if there are significant changes to report.

- The NJ Department of Health and Senior Services Call Center has been discontinued at this time.