

The Swine Flu – Information from the Medical Trust

April 28, 2009

We have all been hearing about the outbreak of Swine Flu in Mexico. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now reporting that 40 cases, much less serious than those reported in Mexico, have been reported in the United States.

According to the World Health Organization, Swine flu, or swine influenza, is a form of a virus that normally infects pigs. There are many forms of flu, and the different varieties have the ability to exchange genes with one another. The form of flu that originated in Mexico is a genetic mixture of viruses that have been seen in pigs, birds, and people. It's being called a swine flu because the overall structure of the virus is of the type that affects pigs.

The CDC is working closely with state and local officials, as well as Mexico, Canada, and the World Health Organization, to investigate the human cases of swine influenza. It is important to communicate that there is no human influenza pandemic at this time.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and the CDC will provide new information as it becomes available. You can review this information at the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov> and follow the links for Swine Flu. For more local information you can visit your state's health department on line.

Things You Can Do

The Atlanta-based federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are recommending several steps to prevent the spread of the virus:

- 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 hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid contact with sick people. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Do not return until two days after your symptoms are gone.
- Masks may be recommended for health care workers, family members, and others who come in close contact with swine flu patients, but there is no need for the general public to wear masks.

How to Properly Wash Your Hands

- Wet hands and apply soap
- Rub hands together to create friction
- Wash for at least 20 seconds

- Wash under fingernails and in creases
- Rinse well
- Dry hands
- Use paper towel to touch surfaces
- Dispose of paper towel

Learn more, including the proper use of hand sanitizers.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hand-washing/HQ00407>