



New Flu Virus (H₁N₁) Update – June 1, 2009 at 3:30pm

As of Friday, May 29, 2009, the Santa Clara County Public Health Department reported 34 additional probable cases of the new flu virus (H1N1). The current total for Santa Clara County is now 44 confirmed cases and 35 probable cases for a total of 79 cases in the county. Four (4) of these cases were hospitalized and have either recovered or are recovering at home.

The number of confirmed cases increased because confirmatory testing took place at the state and federal levels. The Santa Clara County Public Health Department will continue to consider all probable cases as confirmed H1N1 cases because public health actions do not change based on whether a case is probable or confirmed. Over 95% of the specimens classified as probable have been confirmed as the new H1N1 virus.

Influenza is always a serious disease. Each year in the United States, seasonal influenza causes about 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations. At this time, health officials do not know how severe this new flu virus (H1N1) outbreak will be in terms of illness and death compared with other influenza viruses. It's too soon to predict what will happen or how the virus might change, but this outbreak has the potential to be at least as and possibly more serious than seasonal flu.

The Public Health Department will report individual cases for as long as possible, and then will use a seasonal surveillance system to track the progress of the H₁N₁ flu virus. Routine seasonal surveillance does not count individual cases, but instead monitors activity levels through a local surveillance system based in most of the Emergency Departments of hospitals in our community.

Everyday, we learn more about this virus. The actions and guidance the Public Health Department provides may change in response to what we learn. That is our role, but you too have a role in protecting yourself and your family and it is important to stay informed. Health officials will provide additional information as it becomes available, but right now you can go to www.sccphd.org or visit www.cdc.gov for more information.

Information about the new flu virus, H1N1, is also available on the California Department of Public Health's toll-free hotline at 1-888-865-0564 (Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday/Sunday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.).