



New Flu Virus (H₁N₁) Update – June 5, 2009 at 2:00 pm

As of yesterday, June 4, 2009, the Santa Clara County Public Health Department has reported a total of 87 cases of the new flu virus (H1N1) in Santa Clara County. The current total includes 45 confirmed cases and 42 probable cases. Five (5) cases were hospitalized and have either recovered or are recovering at home.

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, the H1N1 virus is behaving much like seasonal flu, however, health officials do not know how this new virus may change over time. It's too soon to predict what will happen, but this new flu virus 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.

Since this new flu virus is still circulating in our community, it is important for all of us to continue to take common sense precautions.

- If you are feeling sick stay home from work or school. If your symptoms get worse, call your physician or medical provider.
- Wash your hands with soap and hot water to get rid of germs and prevent the spread of disease, especially after coughing and sneezing. If you do not have soap and water, use a waterless hand gel with an alcohol base of at least 60%.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue whenever you sneeze and cough. Throw the tissue away in a waste basket. If you do not have a tissue, sneeze or cough into the fold of your elbow, without using your hands.

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.).