



COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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PRECAUTIONS URGED AS PANDEMIC (H1N1) 2009 INFLUENZA CONTINUES TO SPREAD

(Santa Ana) – Orange County health officials are urging the public to take precautionary measures to limit the spread of the novel H1N1 influenza virus (the World Health organization now calls this virus pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza).

“Most of us don’t think about influenza during the summer months, and we may not be exercising enough caution,” said County Health Officer Dr. Eric Handler. “Even though we are in mid-summer, the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza is continuing to spread from person to person causing illnesses. It is important to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, wash your hands frequently, and stay home if you are sick.”

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza is now widespread in communities throughout California. Under new reporting guidelines, only hospitalized or fatal cases and clusters of cases in healthcare facilities, institutions, and other settings will be reported to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Previously counties and local health jurisdictions reported every confirmed and probable case of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza to CDPH.

While most people with pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza experience relatively mild illness, Orange County has reported eleven fatalities associated with pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza. All of the individuals who died had pre-existing health conditions, making them more susceptible to complications with influenza.

A specific vaccine to protect against the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza is not expected to be available until late in the year; however, there are actions that people can take to help prevent the spread of germs that cause influenza illness:

- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water and use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid social gatherings if you are ill or if you have a medical condition that puts you at risk for influenza complications

The symptoms of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza are the same as symptoms of seasonal influenza and include fever, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. In addition, some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with the virus. If you are sick or think you may have pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza, stay home. If you have severe illness or are at risk for complications of influenza, consult your healthcare provider.

For more information and the latest updates about pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza in Orange County, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com.

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