

Preparing for H1N1 Influenza A (Swine Flu) Pandemic

WHAT IS THE SWINE FLU?

Swine flu (H1N1 Influenza A) is respiratory disease that is similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. Like seasonal flu, the severity of swine flu can vary from mild to severe. Since entering the United States in late April 2009, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) there have been thousands of confirmed cases in all states, with 7,983 hospitalized cases and 522 deaths. Those numbers are expected to significantly increase as we enter flu season.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of the seasonal flu, including fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuff nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.

A significant number of people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. Those who are at the highest risk are young children, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic medical conditions.

PREVENTION

Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- ✓ Wash your hands often with soap or alcohol based cleaner, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- ✓ Avoid close contact with sick people.
- ✓ Stay home when sick.

HOW FAR CAN AIRBORNE VIRUSES TRAVEL?

Coughing	1-5 feet
Sneezing	8-15 feet
Singing, Talking	1-3 feet
Breathing	1-3 feet

INFORMATION FOR BUSINESSES & EMPLOYEES

The mounting risk of a worldwide influenza pandemic poses many potentially devastating consequences in the U.S. A pandemic will dramatically reduce the number of available workers in all sectors, and significantly disrupt the movement of people and goods, which will threaten essential services and operations within and across the country. Thus, each community, sector and industry must be primarily reliant on its own internal resources for response.

Employers help control the flu beginning with employee training on awareness and prevention measures. Employers are encouraged to make supplies such as tissues, hand soap and sanitary wipes available, and to sanitize commonly touched surfaces.

Facility management professionals are encouraged to perform pre-planning and develop business continuity plans. Pre-planning involves establishing internal and external communication protocols; reviewing corporate policies on time off, visitor restrictions, travel restrictions, triggers for building closure, mandatory absences, preventative measures, and, medical clearance.

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For more information on protecting your facilities from airborne viruses or to request a free copy of the Pandemic Preparedness manual, contact Wynn White at wwhite@wynnwhite.com

