

## H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) Confirmed in Oklahoma

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) announced today that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have confirmed a case of 2009 H1N1 influenza (swine flu) virus in Oklahoma.

The patient is an adult female from Pontotoc County. The patient did not require hospitalization and is expected to make a full recovery. The patient did recently return from a trip to Mexico.

“This is not a surprising development,” said Interim Commissioner of Health Rocky McElvany. “We expected to find cases of the H1N1 influenza in Oklahoma and there is no need for alarm.”

McElvany said state and local public health officials were monitoring this case to limit exposure to others while confirmatory test results were pending from the CDC. Individuals who have been in contact with the patient are being interviewed and will be tested if necessary.

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to seasonal influenza and include fever greater than 100 degrees, body aches, coughing, sore throat, respiratory congestion, and in some cases, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. Physicians with patients who have these symptoms and have traveled to Mexico or other affected areas should send nasal and throat specimens to the OSDH Public Health Laboratory for analysis.

The virus is spread person-to-person, not by eating pork or pork products.

Currently there is no vaccine to prevent H1N1 flu and the current flu vaccine used to prevent seasonal influenza will not provide protection against this new flu strain.

Persons who experience flu-like symptoms should contact their physician. Some antiviral drugs may be used to treat persons at high risk of complications from the disease. Health officials caution that aspirin should not be given to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever. Instead, use medications such as acetaminophen to relieve fever and muscle aches associated with the flu. The use of aspirin in children has been associated with Reye’s syndrome, a potentially fatal disease in children, causing harmful effects to many organs, including the brain and liver.

The OSDH reminds the public to continue to practice these recommendations to prevent the spread of influenza:

- Wash hands often to protect yourself from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; germs are often spread when a person touches a contaminated object and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or “sneeze in your sleeve.”
- If you are sick, stay home from work, school, church, and running errands. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

The OSDH and its local county health departments have taken these steps to respond to the H1N1 influenza outbreak:

- Provided physicians and laboratories with guidance on monitoring and testing patients with flu-like illness.
- Activated the OSDH Emergency Operations Center to formally manage a public health response to this event.
- Issued a Public Health Travel Advisory for persons planning travel to Mexico.
- Received the state’s portion of the Strategic National Stockpile for antiviral drugs and respiratory protection equipment.
- Established an H1N1 Influenza Update page on the OSDH Web site.
- Activated a phone bank to handle calls from the public, health care providers and community partners.
- Conducted daily conference calls with community partners, emergency management personnel and other key organizations in an effort to efficiently provide communications updates.

Persons with questions about H1N1 influenza may call the OSDH H1N1 flu toll-free hotline at 1-866-278-7134 from 8 am to 8 pm. Additional information is available by visiting the OSDH Web site at [www.health.ok.gov](http://www.health.ok.gov) and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu) , or by calling your local county health department.