

# Risk Control Bulletin

## Influenza

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness and, at times, death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination each year. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that on average 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related complications and about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes every year in the United States.

One of the most recent threats of influenza is the 2009 H1N1 swine flu strain. According to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, an outbreak of the 2009 H1N1 swine flu could be very widespread this flu season. The CDC provides access to various Web sites with updated and detailed information on various influenzas.

The H1N1 swine flu is expected to re-emerge this winter with a large impact in the United States. A special Web site has been established to provide weekly updates on the number of hospitalized 2009 H1N1 cases and deaths. For more information about CDC's 2009 H1N1 influenza surveillance system, see Questions & Answers about CDC's 2009 H1N1 Influenza Surveillance at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/reportingqa.htm>.

Helpful information listed below provides what you can do to decrease your chances of flu exposure:

- 2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- 2009 H1N1 Flu Situation Update Map <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm>
- Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>
- Seasonal or Common Influenza <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>
- Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for an Influenza Pandemic [http://www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza\\_pandemic.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza_pandemic.html)
- Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Guidance for Healthcare Workers and Healthcare Employers [http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA\\_pandemic\\_health.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA_pandemic_health.pdf)

## Business Continuity Planning

An influenza outbreak that affects a large percentage of the population is a pandemic. In the event of a pandemic, the United States Government's Web site has checklists and helpful information on maintaining business continuity for schools, hospitals, businesses and communities at: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

## Traveling Outside the United States

In June 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) signaled a worldwide pandemic alert level for the 2009 H1N1 flu. This action was a reflection of the spread of the new H1N1 virus. More than 70 countries had reported cases of novel influenza. Review the WHO Web site before traveling outside the United States and be sure to have the appropriate vaccination for the area you plan to visit. [http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/phase/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html)

For more information please call us toll-free at 866-262-0540 or visit us online at [www.cna.com/riskcontrol](http://www.cna.com/riskcontrol).

## **Know What to Do About the Flu**

The CDC suggests the single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get a vaccination each year. Follow these common sense suggestions from the CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>) to help prevent the spread of flu:

- 1. Avoid close contact.**  
Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- 2. Stay home when you are sick.**  
If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- 3. Cover your mouth and nose.**  
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- 4. Clean your hands.**  
Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- 5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**  
Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- 6. Practice other good health habits.**  
Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

You can contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 24 hours/every day at (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348, or e-mail [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)

## **Customer Training Resource**

How can you train your employees? When there is an organization-wide awareness of safety and health risks, employees are more likely to remember and adhere to appropriate precautions. CNA's *SORCE On Demand* <http://cnatraining.puresafety.com> provides the online course, Pandemic Influenza, located under the Employee Health category. This training can help clear up misperceptions about what a pandemic is, ensure employees are aware of the seriousness of H1N1, and provide valuable information about how to minimize the spread of viruses.

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