

Houston Area Health Alert Network

This Health Advisory is being sent to participating Emergency Departments, ICPs, physicians, nurses, labs and other providers. We would appreciate your assistance with distributing this information as appropriate within your institution. Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services is responsible for maintaining the Houston Area Health Alert Network (HAN). For more information about the HAN, to subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact Cindy Kilborn at 713-439-6160 or ckilborn@hcpbes.org.

HAN Health Alert

Human Swine Influenza Investigation-Update 4-26 -2009

As of April 26, 2009, a total of 20 human cases of swine influenza A have been confirmed in the U.S., in California, Texas, Kansas, New York City and Ohio.

CDC is working closely with state and local officials in California and Texas and other health and animal officials on investigations into these cases.

The World Health Organization is currently deliberating as to whether or not to increase the pandemic phase level from the current Phase 3 of the Pandemic Alert Period.

Clinicians

Recommendations for testing have changed. CDC recommends that clinicians should consider the possibility of swine influenza virus infections in patients presenting with febrile respiratory illness who

1. Live in an area where human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) have been identified or
2. Have traveled to an area where human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) have been identified or
3. Have been in contact with ill persons from these areas in the 7 days prior to their illness onset.

In compliance with these recommendations as well as the circumstances surrounding this outbreak in Texas, the Texas Department of State Health Services recommends that clinicians:

1. Perform influenza testing on **all** patients with **influenza like illness** (ILI: fever >100° F **and** cough and/or sore throat)
2. Perform influenza testing on all patients with **acute respiratory illness** (ARI): recent onset of *at least two* of the following symptoms: rhinorrhea (runny nose) or nasal congestion, sore throat, cough (with or without fever or chills) **and** meet one of the following criteria:
 - a history of recent travel to Mexico (within 7 days) or
 - contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Influenza A.

Clinicians should obtain a **respiratory swab (nasal or nasopharyngeal)** for swine influenza testing and place it in a refrigerator (not a freezer). Once collected, the clinician should contact their state or local health department to facilitate transport and timely diagnosis at a state public health laboratory.

In the Houston area, please contact your local health department Epidemiologists (see contact information at the end of this message) and submit specimens to Houston Department of Health and Human Services Virology Laboratory.

- **Specimens should be submitted within 72 hours of collection, on wet ice packs**
- **Use submission form:**
<http://www.houstontx.gov/health/Lab/New%20Request%20Form-Virology.pdf>
- **Laboratory hours for routine submission are 8:00 am – 5:00 pm M-F**

Please report all suspected swine flu cases to your local health department Epidemiologists:

HOUSTON AREA HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services
Telephone: (713) 439-6000
Fax: (713) 439-6306
After Hours (713) 755-5000

Houston Department of Health and Human Services
Telephone: (713) 794-9181)- 24 hr #
Fax (713) 794-9182

Texas Department of State Health Services Health Service Region 6/5 South
Telephone: (713) 767-3000
Fax: (713) 767-3049
After hours: (800) 270-3128

Galveston County Health District
Telephone: (409) 938-2322
Fax: (409) 938-2399
After hours: (888) 241-0442

Montgomery County Health Department
Telephone: (936) 525-2800
Fax: (936) 539-9272
After hours: (800) 917-8906

Fort Bend County Health and Human Services
Telephone: (281) 342-6414
Fax: (281) 342-7371
After hours (281) 434-6494

Brazoria County Health Department
Telephone: (979) 864-1166
Fax: (979) 864-1501
After hours: (800) 511-1632