

New Flu A H1N1—Homeless Service Agency Guidance #2

Interim Guidance for Caring for Someone with New Flu A H1N1 in Homeless Shelters

PLEASE NOTE: This is a rapidly evolving situation. This alert provides interim guidance. Guidance is likely to change in the upcoming days and weeks as more information becomes available.

The precautions recommended for seasonal flu currently apply to New Flu A H1N1—wash your hands, cover your cough, and encourage staff and volunteers to stay home if sick.

The following information can help you identify symptoms of infection to protect your staff and residents and prevent the further spread of influenza (flu).

ENCOURAGE GOOD INFECTION CONTROL PRACTICES IN YOUR FACILITY

- Post “wash your hands/cover your cough” posters available at:
<http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/respiratoryhygiene.htm>.
- Place hand sanitizer at entrances and in conspicuous locations throughout facility.
- Provide tissues throughout facility and encourage immediate disposal in trash.
- Remind clients and staff to clean their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

PEOPLE WITH ANY INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS SHOULD:

- Check with their health care provider if they have special medical needs due to pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, emphysema or other medical conditions, to see if antiviral medications may be helpful.
- Stay away from others for up to 24 hours after the fever is gone.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Clean hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid close contact with others, including not going to work or school.
- Get emergency medical care if they:
 - Have difficulty breathing
 - Have chest pain
 - Are vomiting and can't keep liquids down
 - Are less responsive than normal

HOW TO LESSEN THE SPREAD OF FLU IN THE SHELTER

- Keep the sick person away from others.
 - Separate individuals by 3-6 feet when possible
 - Let them use a separate room and bathroom if possible
 - Have them avoid common living areas
 - Dedicate staff member(s) to be caregivers; make sure care givers are not pregnant women
 - Avoid having visitors
 - Arrange beds so that individuals lay head to toe relative to each other
 - In larger rooms, create temporary physical barriers between beds using sheets or curtains
 - Remind everyone in the shelter to clean their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
- Provide them with a simple face mask to reduce the spray of respiratory secretions into the environment.
- Open windows in sleeping areas, group rooms, restrooms to maintain good ventilation in shared areas.
- Avoid letting sick residents leave the shelter until 24 hours after their fever ends.
- If residents must leave, try to provide them with:
 - Food and beverages to avoid infecting others while standing in food lines
 - Tissues or other care items

IF YOU ARE REQUIRED TO INTERACT WITH A SICK PERSON

- Avoid being face-to-face with the sick person.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- When holding sick child, place their chin on your shoulder so they won't cough in your face.
- Monitor yourself, staff, and volunteers for flu symptoms and contact a telephone hotline or health care provider if symptoms occur.
- Talk to your health care provider about taking antiviral medication to prevent getting the flu.

USING FACEMASKS OR RESPIRATORS

- Avoid close contact (less than 3-6 feet away) with the sick person as much as possible.
- If you must have close contact with the sick person (for example, hold a sick infant), spend the least amount of time possible in close contact and try to wear a facemask (for example, surgical mask) or N95 disposable respirator.
- An N95 respirator that fits snugly on your face can filter out small particles that can be inhaled around the edges of a facemask, but compared with a facemask it is harder to breathe through an N95 mask for long periods of time. More information on facemasks and respirators can be found at www.cdc.gov/swineflu.
- Facemasks and respirators may be purchased at a pharmacy, building supply or hardware store.

- If a sick person receives respiratory treatments, they should be performed in a separate room away from common areas of the shelter when at all possible.
- Used facemasks and N95 respirators should be taken off and placed immediately in the regular trash so they don't touch anything else.
- Avoid re-using disposable facemasks and N95 respirators if possible. If a reusable fabric facemask must be used, it should be laundered with normal laundry detergent and tumble-dried in a hot dryer before reuse.
- After you take off a facemask or N95 respirator, clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

GENERAL SHELTER CLEANING, LAUNDRY, AND WASTE DISPOSAL

- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands with soap and water after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without being laundered first.
- Wash linens (such as bed sheets and towels) by using household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid "hugging" laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating yourself. Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with hot water and soap.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website for the most recent U.S. information. <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>.
- Call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline (1-800-CDC-INFO).
- Call 2-1-1 if you need help finding medical care.
- Visit Department of Public Health website for local information: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/>.
- Call your local Los Angeles County, Department of Public Health Area Health Office:

Service Planning Area	Contact Person	Phone Number
1 (Antelope Valley) and 2 (San Fernando)	Dr. Pomerance	(818) 487-0068
3 (San Gabriel)	Dr. Liggins	(323) 563-4062
4 (Metro)	Dr. Poitier	(213) 240-7837
5 (West) and 6 (South)	Dr. Liggins	(323) 563-4062
7 (East)	Dr. Rathbun	(562) 354-2219
8 (South Bay)	Dr. Kushner	(310) 419-5301 or (310) 354-2219