



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES
DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
PO BOX 369
TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0369

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

www.nj.gov/health

HEATHER HOWARD
Commissioner

April 28, 2009

Swine Influenza Guidance for Healthcare Providers

As you are aware, New Jersey has identified probable cases of swine influenza. The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) would like to ensure that patients with influenza-like illness are appropriately managed. NJDHSS would also like to ensure that healthcare resources are optimally utilized. Therefore, we are asking providers to only send patients to hospital emergency departments (ED) if clinically indicated. Do not send patients with mild illness to the ED for the primary purpose of influenza testing. You may test for influenza if it will influence your clinical decision making; however, **NJDHSS Public Health and Environmental Laboratories (PHEL) will no longer be accepting specimens from ILI patients who do not require admission to an acute care facility.** NJDHSS would like to ensure that healthcare providers are taking precautions to prevent transmission of influenza-like illnesses within the office setting. Providers must take steps to ensure a safer environment for patients and staff. These include:

Institute Triage Policies

- Ask patients with influenza-like illnesses to identify themselves upon arrival.
- Ensure that patients with influenza-like illnesses are evaluated expeditiously.
- Consider scheduling patients with influenza-like illnesses at the end of the day or at a time separate from well visits.
- Consider having patients with influenza-like illnesses arrive through a separate entrance or wait in a different area from others.
- Ensure that you or a member of your staff calls ahead if you are referring a patient with an influenza-like illness to another medical facility.
- Encourage your staff and your patients with influenza-like illnesses to remain at home.

Follow Respiratory Etiquette and Hand Hygiene

- Place signs in waiting areas describing Respiratory Etiquette guidelines. Additional information and signage are available at <http://www.nj.gov/health/flu> and <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>.
- Provide tissues in the waiting area to contain respiratory secretions when coughing or sneezing.
- Provide no-touch receptacles for disposal of used tissues.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers in waiting areas and encourage hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions.
- Provide symptomatic individuals with surgical masks to wear while interacting with others in the office.

Ensure Availability of Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment

- Use standard, droplet and contact precautions for all patient care activities for all patients with influenza-like illness.
- Wear disposable non-sterile gloves, gowns and eye protection when collecting clinical specimens from suspected or confirmed cases. Personnel engaged in aerosol-generating activities for

suspected or confirmed novel influenza cases should wear a fit-tested disposable N95 respirator. Pending clarification of transmission patterns for this virus, personnel providing direct patient care for suspected or confirmed swine influenza A (H1N1) cases should wear a fit-tested N95 respirator when entering the patient room. If an N95 is not available, use a surgical mask. Additional information about infection control is available at http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidelines_infection_control.htm.

Use Antiviral Agents Appropriately

- Follow guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the appropriate use of antiviral agents for treatment and prophylaxis. This guidance can be accessed on the CDC web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/recommendations.htm>. You should check this website regularly as recommendations are subject to change.

Provide Detailed Discharge Instructions

- Ensure that patients receive information about taking care of an ill individual at home.
- Instruct individuals to stay home for seven days after illness onset and until symptoms are resolved; wash their hands frequently, especially after coughing and sneezing; cough into a tissue (not bare hands or onto another person); and dispose of tissues in the trash.
- Ensure that contacts at high-risk for complications from influenza be referred for appropriate medical management as per CDC guidance.

Understand Surveillance and Reporting Policies

- Keep abreast of information about the status of this swine influenza outbreak in New Jersey by accessing the NJDHSS web site at <http://www.nj.gov/health> and the CDC web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance>.
- NJDHSS is collecting information only for hospitalized patients and clusters of individuals with suspected swine influenza.
- Contact your local health department <http://nj.gov/health/lh/directory/lhdselectcounty.shtml>