

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL



SAFETY ALERT

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SAFETY ALERT 09-2

Swine Influenza Health Alert Issued April 28, 2009

The United States and Mexico have confirmed the outbreak of a swine influenza A (H1N1) virus not previously detected in humans or pigs. The human form of influenza A (H1N1), which is genetically similar, but not identical to the current outbreak, was responsible for the 1918 pandemic that killed between 50 and 100 million people. Similar to the 1918 pandemic, the current outbreak is affecting adults, whereas influenza typically affects young, elderly, or immune-compromised individuals. There have been at least five probable cases in New Jersey.

Facts about the Influenza A (H1N1) virus		
<u>Infectious Period</u> One to three days before the onset of illness to three to nine days after onset of illness.	<u>Transmission</u> Person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes propelled through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose or contact with respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touching the mouth or nose.	<u>Symptoms</u> Fever, chills, headache, lethargy, body aches, runny nose, coughing, respiratory congestion, sore throat, loss of appetite, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting.

It is important to note that the swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is not spread through the consumption of pork or pork products.

Basic precautionary measures can help to prevent the further spread of the disease, including frequent hand washing with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze; avoiding exposure to symptomatic individuals; covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. If you get sick, stay home from work or school, and limit contact with others.

If your fire department responds to EMS calls or performs patient care at emergency scenes, the Division of Fire Safety recommends the following actions to be taken in addition to customary universal precautions:

1. Ask the victim if he/she is suffering from any flu-like symptoms. If the answer is yes, request that he/she wear an N-95 surgical mask or one designed to protect against airborne diseases and place a mask on the victim. If the victim refuses, fire department members in the area of the victim must don surgical masks.
2. Ask all other occupants of the residence if they are suffering from flu-like symptoms. If the answer is yes, provide them with an N-95 surgical mask or one designed to protect against airborne diseases. If they refuse, fire department members in the area of the victim must don surgical masks.
3. If the victim is unconscious or is otherwise unable to express their chief complaint, place an N-95 surgical mask or one designed to protect against airborne diseases. If this is not possible due to airway management issues fire department members in the area of the victim must don surgical masks.
4. If there is any doubt, the lead EMT should either place an N-95 surgical mask or one designed to protect against airborne diseases on the victim or require fire department members to don them.

Additional information about the swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>.

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