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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The Waushara County Health Department is working closely with the Wisconsin Division of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor the swine flu situation. There are now confirmed cases of H1N1, Swine Flu in Wisconsin. There are many suspect cases being tested and results are pending, a few of those are in Waushara County. The number of confirmed cases in the United States continues to rise because health officials are pursuing very active surveillance.

The most frequent question we get asked is: What is the big deal? This does not seem any different than the regular flu season. In a potential pandemic such as this we look at history for what has been the best and worst case scenarios. Our job is not to frighten but to educate. History has shown us that when you deal with a novel or new virus, that the more it travels from person to person it tends to mutate, or change, and sometimes this causes it to become more deadly, more resistant to treatment available. So our history also teaches us that if we lessen the spread, staying further away from people, washing hands, and social distancing (a fancy term for closing schools and mass gatherings, if necessary) we can lessen the spread and save lives. That is the big deal.

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever of 100 degrees or higher, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some of the confirmed cases have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. If these symptoms should occur keep your child home from school and if an adult stay home from work. Call your health care provider. Your health care provider may ask more questions before deciding if you need to be tested and/or treated.

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Infected people may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. You should stay home for at least 24 hours after your symptoms have resolved.

Right now there is no vaccine for H1N1 flu but there are some everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illness like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

- Cough or sneeze into the elbow area of your shirt sleeve if a cough or sneeze catches you off guard.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners are effective in reducing the amount of germs on your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. This is one way to spread germs.
- The Division of Public Health is encouraging avoiding smoking or quitting smoking altogether as a way to avoid getting sick.
- Try to avoid close contact (6 feet or less) with sick people.
- If you get sick, the CDC recommends you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others, even in your own home, to keep from infecting them.
- Put together a personal and or family plan if you need to stay home. For information on this go to the <http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/index.html>

For detailed information and updates about swine flu in Wisconsin go to: pandemic.wi.gov or visit the CDC website at: cdc.gov/swineflu.

Also, be sure to stay tuned to your local media sources for updated information.

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