



HEALTH ADVISORY

August 14, 2012

PLEASE SHARE WITH PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS, NURSES, INFECTION PREVENTIONISTS, EMERGENCY ROOM DIRECTORS, URGENT CARE DIRECTORS, AND LABORATORY DIRECTORS

This Health Advisory Update replaces the Health Advisory on Influenza A H3N2v issued on August 3, 2012 and posted on the Los Angeles County (LAC) Department of Public Health (DPH) website (<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/docs/Flu/H3N2vHealthAdvisory.pdf>). This update provides information and recommendations regarding enhanced surveillance for H3N2v, including testing and reporting guidelines.

CURRENT SITUATION

- A recent increase in human cases with H3N2v infection has been reported in several states. Since July 2012, a total of 145 persons with confirmed H3N2v infection had been reported. The majority of cases have been in children with mild self-limiting illness similar to seasonal influenza. No fatalities from H3N2v have been reported to date. National H3N2v case counts will be updated by the CDC every Friday at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/influenza-variant-viruses-h3n2v.htm>.
- No H3N2v cases have been detected in LAC or California to date.
- All cases reported nationwide since July 2012 had contact with swine prior to the onset of illness. There is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission of H3N2v in the community at this time. Exposure to swine at agricultural fairs appears to be a significant risk factor; individuals should take action to prevent the spread of viruses between people and also between people and pigs.
- The seasonal influenza vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against H3N2v; however, influenza vaccination is still recommended for protection against seasonal influenza viruses which are much more common causes of illness in humans than H3N2v.
- Treatment with oseltamivir or zanamivir is expected to be effective for H3N2v and recommendations for antiviral use are the same as with seasonal influenza.
- Pork products are safe to eat.

TESTING

- At this time, only specific public health laboratories are able to test for H3N2v including the LAC DPH Public Health Laboratory (PHL).
- Please send specimens to the LAC DPH PHL from:
 - All persons with influenza-like illness (ILI*) admitted to the hospital
 - ILI* in persons with swine exposure within seven days of onset of illness
 - ILI* in persons who can be epidemiologically linked to confirmed cases of H3N2v.

* *Influenza-like illness = fever (>100°F or 37.8°C) and cough and/or sore throat, in the absence of a known cause.*

- Upper respiratory samples suitable for RT-PCR include: nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs, nasal swabs, throat swabs, nasal aspirate, nasal washes, NP wash, and NP aspirate. For patients hospitalized with pneumonia, specimens from the lower respiratory tract should also be obtained. Lower respiratory tract samples suitable for RT-PCR include: bronchoalveolar lavage, bronchial wash, tracheal aspirate, and lung tissue.
- Place polyester-tipped swabs (cotton or calcium alginate swabs are not acceptable for PCR testing) in a standard container with 2-3 ml of viral transport media (VTM).
- Specimens should be collected within the first 24-72 hours of onset of symptoms and no later than 4 days after onset of symptoms. The specimens should be kept refrigerated at 4°C and sent on cold packs if they can be received by the laboratory within 3 days of the date collected. If samples cannot be received by the laboratory within 3 days, they should be frozen at -70°C or below and shipped on dry ice.
- The LAC DPH PHL has created a special form to submit specimens for H3N2v testing. It is available at: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/lab/labinfo.htm> (under Influenza and Influenza-like Illness). This form must be used when submitting specimens.

Specimens should be sent to:

Los Angeles County
 Department of Public Health
 Public Health Laboratory
 12750 Erickson Avenue
 Downey, CA 90242

Telephone: (562) 658-1300
 Fax: (562) 401-5999

REPORTING

- All ILI* outbreaks and all influenza-related fatalities are reportable to LAC DPH.
** Influenza-like illness = fever (>100°F or 37.8°C) and cough and/or sore throat, in the absence of a known cause.*
- You may call 888-397-3993 or fax 888-397-3778 to report an outbreak or influenza-related mortality.
- Use this form to report cases: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/reports/CMR-H-794.pdf>

Please save specimens from influenza-related deaths for further testing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- For additional information on influenza A (H3N2v) in the United States, including diagnosis and treatment recommendations, please refer to CDC's website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/influenza-variant-viruses-h3n2v.htm>
- A CDPH H3N2v fact sheet is available at: [http://cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza\(Flu\).aspx](http://cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza(Flu).aspx)
- Updated information about influenza, and other respiratory pathogens, in LAC may be found on the LAC DPH Influenza Watch web page: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/FluSurveillance.htm>