



Tulare County  
Health & Human Services Agency

# MEMO

**DATE:** April 27, 2009

**TO:** Candace Hilvers, Tulare County Office of Education

**FROM:** Dr. Karen Haught, Public Health Officer

**CC:** Ray Bullick, Director of Health

**SUBJECT: TULARE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISES ON SWINE FLU**

The National Department of Health and Human Services has issued a nationwide public health emergency declaration in response to recent human infections with newly discovered swine influenza A (swine flu) virus.

It is very important that if you get sick, the CDC and the Tulare County Health Department recommend that you stay home from school or work, and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. If your child is absent from school during a period of standardized testing, individual class testing, or other education related commitments, please understand that they will not be penalized, and school administrators will handle each situation accordingly.

It is vital during this time that all residents are aware of the recommended actions that can be taken to prevent the spread of swine influenza. Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza among pigs. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans; however, human infections with swine flu do occur, and cases of human-to-human spread of swine flu viruses have been documented in the past. Experts stress that swine flu is not transmitted by food, and that all food-borne germs are killed when pork is cooked to the recommended internal temperature of 160 F.

There are currently no reported cases of swine flu in Tulare County, however to date; there have been 11 laboratory confirmed cases in California. In total, there have been 48 confirmed cases of swine Influenza A nationally, and the majority of these cases have been mild. At this time no deaths in the U.S. have been reported due to the illness.

The CDC and the Tulare County Health Department recommend that residents of all ages take the following precautions to prevent the spread of swine influenza:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.



- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

If you get sick, the CDC and the Tulare County Health Department recommends that you stay home from school or work, and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact your health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

The Tulare County Health Department reminds you that if you, or anyone in your family is displaying the aforementioned symptoms, they should stay home from school or work, and seek the advice of their primary care physician.

The Tulare County Department of Health will continue to provide timely information releases on this outbreak, and all actions taken. For information on swine flu, visit [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu).