

H1N1 Spreading in LaPorte County and Across the Country

LaPorte County, IN (October 19, 2009) - The LaPorte County Health Department issued this statement today:

"The H1N1 influenza is increasing very quickly in LaPorte County. Many of our county schools are reporting 30% absentee rates. If your child is sick or has a fever, please keep them home. If you, the parent, are sick or have a fever, please stay home. Don't get the flu...don't spread the flu."

From the CDC:

The symptoms of 2009 H1N1 flu virus in people include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, including 2009 H1N1 and have respiratory symptoms without a fever. Severe illnesses and deaths have occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus.

- Visits to doctors for influenza-like illness (ILI) continued to increase in the United States, and overall, are higher than what is expected for this time of the year. ILI activity now is equal to or higher than what is seen at the peak of many regular flu seasons.
- Total influenza hospitalization rates for laboratory-confirmed flu are climbing and are higher than expected for this time of year.
- The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza based on the 122 Cities Report has increased and exceeds what is normally expected at this time of year. In addition, 11 flu-related pediatric deaths were reported in the U.S. this week; 10 of these deaths were confirmed 2009 H1N1, and one was influenza A virus, but un-sub-typed. Since April 2009, there have been 86 confirmed U.S. pediatric 2009 H1N1 deaths; 39 of these have been reported to CDC since August 30, 2009.
- Almost all of the influenza viruses identified so far are 2009 H1N1 influenza A viruses. These viruses remain similar to the virus chosen for the 2009 H1N1 vaccine, and remain susceptible to the antiviral drugs oseltamivir and zanamivir with rare exception.
- The secondary attack rate reflects the risk of someone being infected with a disease by an ill close contact (for example, a family member, classmate or co-worker). Epidemiologic field studies in several states found a secondary attack rate in household contacts for acute-respiratory-illness (ARI) was 18 % to 19% and 8% to 12% for influenza-like-illness (ILI). ARI is defined as two or more of the following four symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, and rhinorrhea (runny nose). ILI is defined as fever and cough or sore throat. In general, these household secondary attack rates are slightly lower than what occurs in seasonal influenza. The use of antiviral medications (which can reduce viral shedding) to treat cases or prevent influenza in household contacts may have decreased secondary attack rates.
- CDC studied the hospital records of 268 patients hospitalized with novel H1N1 flu early on during the outbreak. The analysis found that the prevalence of selected underlying conditions was significantly higher among hospitalized novel H1N1 flu patients compared to the prevalence in the general U.S.

populations, except for chronic renal disease and obesity. For example, asthma occurs in 8% of the U.S. population, but 32% of hospitalized novel H1N1 flu patients had asthma. With seasonal flu, underlying medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease and pregnancy place people at greater risk of serious flu-related complications. (People may have reported one or more underlying conditions.)

Questions about the H1N1 vaccine should be directed to the LaPorte County Health Department at 219/326-6808 X2200 or by email to H1N1@laportecounty.org. Visit the website at www.laportecounty.org and click on "current local flu information" just beneath the waving flag.

Questions about the content of this press release should be directed to the LaPorte County Health Department using above contact information. Technical questions about the press release (PDF) received via email should be directed to JK Enterprises at jkostielney@csinet.net.