

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

REGARDING

SWINE INFLUENZA

There have been 40 reported cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) in the United States as of the writing of this message. Mexico has reported several hundred suspect cases including several deaths associated with swine influenza. No cases have been discovered in West Virginia however we need to be prepared to possibly take care of these patients and at the same time keep ourselves protected from the swine flu.

Swine influenza is a respiratory illness that usually occurs in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. The symptoms of swine flu are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting also.

The swine flu is spread when infected people cough or sneeze. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

At this point we need to heighten the awareness of our Respiratory Etiquette policy (attached) however if we begin to have swine flu cases in our community we will need 6 feet social distancing and not the 3 feet as stated in our policy. Other infection control measures may be instituted depending on the number and severity of the outbreak.

Basic measures to take to decrease the spread of swine or any type of influenza are the following:

- * Place tissues and hand sanitizer at the check in desks of all clinics.
- * Have surgical type masks available to give to patients with flu or cold symptoms.
- * Encourage patients to call before coming into their primary care provider if they have flu or cold symptoms.
- * Cover your cough. Cough into shoulder or sleeve instead of hand.
- * Wash hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol based hand cleanser.
- * Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, germs spread this way.

For further updates and recommendations check the CDC website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm>

Primary Care Providers-the above mentioned site also has recommendations for the treatment of swine influenza.

If you have any questions or comments please call Employee Health at 304-598-4160, ext. 3.