



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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County Health Officer Urges Residents to Guard Against Swine Flu

Stanislaus County – As County officials continue to be on alert of the swine flu virus, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer Dr. John Walker is urging all local residents to follow good hygiene practices to protect themselves and their families from being infected. As of to date, there are no confirmed cases in Stanislaus County. “We are on high alert with this situation, and are working to be prepared” stated Walker, “it is critically important for everyone to protect themselves and their families by practicing good hygiene.”

Swine flu ordinarily does not infect humans, but sometimes it does. The new swine flu virus infecting humans is very unusual as it mixes pig, bird, and human genes of the flu. Human infections with swine flu have been detected internationally and in the United States, including California. Symptoms of the swine flu are similar to those of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Fever and body ache are clearly more prominent than that with a common cold.

Public Health officials are recommending that the public take precautions to protect themselves and their families as follows:

- **If you are over 50 or have a chronic medical condition we recommend the pneumococcal vaccine (Pneumovax)** since most of the serious complications of influenza are related to pneumonia.
- **Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.** Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water,** especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Try to avoid close contact with sick people.**
- **If you get sick with the flu, stay home from work or school** and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Germs spread this way.

Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect against swine flu. The current seasonal flu shot will not be effective towards this swine flu. Officials will continue to monitor the situation and make updates as appropriate. Members of the public can call the Swine Flu Hot Line at 558 – 8872 for more pre-recorded information in both English and Spanish.