



Microbe Monthly

Communicable Disease Report

El Paso County Department
of Health & Environment

May 2009

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Outbreak

The CDC, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the El Paso County Department of Health and Environment continue to take aggressive action to respond to an expanding outbreak caused by the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus (a.k.a., swine flu). The primary goals of the public health response are to 1) understand the severity, transmissibility and course of illness; 2) reduce transmission within and across communities; 3) keep the general public informed about the risk. Confirming each and every case is not a priority, nor feasible. Transmission of novel influenza A (H1N1) is being studied as part of the ongoing outbreak investigation, but preliminary data indicate that this virus is transmitted in ways similar to seasonal influenza viruses. Seasonal human influenza viruses are spread from person to person primarily through large-particle respiratory droplet transmission (e.g., when an infected person coughs or sneezes near a susceptible person). Transmission via large-particle droplets requires close human contact between source and recipient persons, because droplets do not remain suspended in the air and generally travel only a short distance (<1 meter) through the air. Contact with respiratory-droplet contaminated surfaces is another possible source of transmission. Because data from swine-origin influenza viruses are limited, the potential for ocular, conjunctival, or gastrointestinal infection is unknown. Since this is a novel influenza A virus in humans, transmission from infected persons to close contacts might be common. All respiratory secretions and bodily fluids (e.g. diarrheal stool) of novel influenza A (H1N1) cases should be considered potentially infectious. The estimated incubation period is unknown and could range from 1-7 days, but preliminary data suggests the incubation period is more likely 1-4 days.



This outbreak is very dynamic and recommendations change regularly as the CDC learns more from ill patients, contact investigations and special studies that are ongoing. EPCDHE strongly recommends that health care providers, hospitals, educational institutions, and other agencies for whom this information is particularly relevant designate one or more individuals in your facility to monitor Web sites from the CDC (www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/index.htm); State Health Department (www.cdph.state.co.us/epr/H1N1.html) and EPCDHE (www.elpasocountyhealth.org), as well as assuring that Health Department Health Alerts are distributed to your staff.

El Paso County Disease Trends

In April 2009, 60 communicable diseases were reported and investigated: *Campylobacter* (3), cryptosporidiosis (1), encephalitis, other (1), *Giardia* (2), *Haemophilus influenzae* (1), hepatitis A (1), acute hepatitis B (1), chronic hepatitis B (4), influenza-related hospitalizations (12), invasive pneumococcal disease (11), legionellosis (1), pertussis (5), *Salmonella* (3), shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* (1), *Varicella* (9) and viral meningitis (4).

At the end of April, El Paso County's total for seasonal influenza-associated hospitalizations total was 94. Of those cases, 89% were influenza type A and 11% were type B.

Influenza Terms

<i>H1N1 influenza</i>	Respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. A novel H1N1 influenza is the virus causing the current outbreak.
<i>Avian influenza</i>	Caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among poultry and wild birds.
<i>Pandemic influenza</i>	Human flu that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness.
<i>Seasonal influenza</i>	Annual winter epidemic in the northern hemisphere. Preventable by vaccine and some cross immunity is possible.

Hot Topics—State and National

CDPHE and several local public health agencies continue to investigate an outbreak of *Campylobacter* infections among residents of Western Slope counties associated with consuming raw (unpasteurized) milk obtained from a cow share program. Since March 30th, 13 cases of lab-confirmed *Campylobacter* infections have been reported in the following counties: Delta (1), Eagle (2), Garfield (2), Mesa (1), Montezuma (1), Montrose (4), Ouray (1), and San Miguel (1). The cases range in age from 2 years to 79 years (median age = 29 years), and 54% are male. Eleven of 13 cases (85%) report drinking raw milk prior to illness onset obtained from a cow share program based out of Montrose. It is possible that raw milk and raw milk products from this dairy may be more widely distributed, so counties across the state may have *Campylobacter* cases reported that are related to this outbreak. Please notify the Communicable Disease Program at 719-578-3220 if you suspect that a case of *Campylobacter* appears to be linked to this outbreak.

Contact Information

CD/TB Program

Weekday Hours (M-Th)* 719-578-3220

After-Hours Emergency 719-385-9622

Immunizations

719-578-3272

Environmental Health

719-575-8636

***Note: Health Department regular hours are Monday—Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Weekday Hours (M-F) 303-692-2700

After-Hours 303-370-9395