

Partners in Preparedness

News for Trusted Local Leaders

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www.nyhealth.gov/publications/7102.pdf

This special edition of the *Partners in Preparedness* newsletter is intended to update leaders of faith-based and community-based organizations about the current H1N1 (Swine Flu) outbreak. As a trusted leader, you have the ability to influence people to make decisions that will make a real difference in how well our community responds to the outbreak. Read on to learn more.

BULLETIN BONUS: Your congregants or members may not realize that their health is—literally—in their own hands. Here's some information you can drop into your bulletin or newsletter:

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO FIGHT THE FLU!

You've heard this before but it's true—and more important than ever. Did you know that frequent hand-washing can help prevent flu? Your hands may look clean, but they have germs on them that could make you or someone else sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to protect yourself from germs and avoid spreading them to others. Carry an alcohol-based hand rub (also called hand sanitizer) to use when soap and water are not available. Choose a product with at least 60% alcohol. And use a tissue to cover your cough or sneeze, or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hand. *The New York State Department of Health has a helpful pocket card with other advice on how to fight the flu. You can download a "Healthy Habits Pocket Card" card from*

H1N1 (SWINE) FLU FAQs

There has been a lot of information in the media about the new H1N1 (Swine Flu) virus that has made people sick in New York State and other states and countries but many people want to know more. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers, prepared by the New York State Department of Health.

Q: How are people getting sick from this H1N1 flu?

CDC has determined that this H1N1 flu virus is spreading from person to person. Spread from person to person is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu, mainly through coughing or sneezing of infected people. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the H1N1 flu virus spreads between people.

Q. What are the signs and symptoms of this H1N1 flu in people?

The symptoms of this H1N1 flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever greater than 100°F, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Like seasonal flu, this H1N1 flu can vary in severity from mild to severe, and may cause a worsening of underlying chronic

medical conditions. The severity of illness from the current H1N1 flu strain is not yet clear.

Flu FAQs (cont.)

Q. Should I ask my doctor for a prescription anti-flu drug?

No. Antiviral drugs are usually used to treat people who are at risk for developing life-threatening complications from the flu. There is no reason to routinely ask for one of these drugs to keep at home, or to take them just as a precaution. Over-use could result in limited supplies for those who need it most. In addition, over-use of antiviral drugs has been known to lead to flu viruses becoming resistant to the drugs. All drugs, including antivirals, can cause side effects and should only be used when necessary under the direction of a health care provider.

Q: What should I do if I get sick?



If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact your health care provider particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your germs.

CLEANING ADVICE: Flu spreads easily. When people cough or sneeze, they spray droplets of flu virus through the air. These germs can be inhaled by someone else, or they can settle on surfaces, where they get on people's hands. During this H1N1 outbreak, special attention should be paid to cleaning spaces where a lot of people

have close contact, like houses of worship and community centers. Environmental infection control should focus on regular cleaning for most surfaces and only target use of disinfection for surfaces touched frequently by hand. Routine application of disinfectants to housekeeping surfaces (e.g., floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets) is unnecessary. Clean bathroom surfaces on a regular basis. Air sanitizer products have not been shown to disinfect airborne influenza virus or reduce disease transmission and are not recommended.

Good cleaning with soap or detergent in water will remove most microorganisms, as well as soil and organic matter that would otherwise reduce the effectiveness of subsequent disinfection. Where disinfectants are used, products should be registered with USEPA and NYS DEC and labeled as effective against influenza virus on clean, hard non-porous surfaces. Go to:

http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/swine_flu/ for to a list of NYSDEC registered products. Follow label instructions carefully when using disinfectants and cleaners. Many surface disinfectants require the treated surface to remain wet for several minutes to be effective. Take note of any hazard advisories and indications for using personal protective items (such as household gloves). Do not mix disinfectants and cleaners unless the labels indicate it is safe to do so. Combining certain products (such as chlorine bleach and ammonia cleaners) can, result in serious injury or death.

Did You Know? Boosting your immune system by eating healthy foods, and getting enough rest and

exercise can also help protect you
against the flu.