



Plumas County Public Health Agency

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August 28, 2009 H1N1 Flu Update

This past week, a suspected case of the new H1N1 flu has affected at least one child in the Indian Valley Area. She presented to the emergency room at Plumas District Hospital on Wednesday, August 26, with symptoms of high fever and cough. She had been at the mall in Reno over the weekend, a county with an increasing number of H1N1 flu cases in the last month.

No test for H1N1 was done, following current guidelines, as screening tests will not influence treatment decisions. A diagnosis was made based on the patient's history and illness. Because of the new testing guidelines, there will no longer be laboratory confirmed cases of H1N1 in California unless the cases are hospitalizations or are fatalities.

The H1N1 flu was first confirmed, through laboratory testing, in Plumas County in late June 2009. Since then, there has been one additional confirmed case and many suspected cases our communities. Since seasonal flu is rare this time of year, it is likely that people ill with the flu at this time of year have the new H1N1 flu.

Public health officials expect to see an increase in flu cases in the coming months. We are all hoping that the fall flu season will be mild, but it is important to be prepared for all possible scenarios. If flu begins spreading to large numbers of people, state and local health officials will need to balance the risk of flu cases in the community against the disruption that school dismissals or cancellations of public events can cause in both the educational field and in the community.

At this time, state and local public health officials have advised that people can continue activities such as school or work, as long as they are not sick and do not have flu symptoms. Flu-like symptoms include: fever (over 100 degrees F), feverishness, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or stuffy nose. Additional symptoms may be experienced with H1N1, including body aches, feeling very tired and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as local health officials now recommend that **all individuals with an influenza-like illness or symptoms should remain home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications (like acetaminophen or ibuprofen), and should avoid contact with others.**

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination (flu shot) each year. You should also:

- Wash hands often with soap and water or use alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Try to avoid sick people

If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider early. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed. Antiviral drugs can make

your illness milder and make you feel better faster, but you should check with your health care provider on whether or not they are right for you.

Public health officials stress that it is very important to get separate vaccinations for seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu this year. The seasonal flu vaccines will be available in September. It is recommended that people, especially those at high risk for complications from the flu, get this vaccination as soon as it is available from your health care provider or local clinic.

The H1N1 vaccine is under production and may be available sometime between October and January. The H1N1 vaccine may require two shots or nasal mist doses given several weeks apart to provide adequate protection. Plumas County expects to get approximately 4,000 doses of H1N1 vaccine in October, then an additional 1,000 doses each week thereafter through January 2010. High-risk groups may be vaccinated first.

More information is available at the California Department of Public Health website, www.cdph.ca.gov, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu), www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu, or www.countyofplumas.com. CDPH also has a telephone hotline: 1-888-865-0564. You may also call Plumas County Public Health Agency at 283-6330 or 888-801-6330 and ask to speak with the Nurse of the Day.