

WHITMAN COUNTY

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PRESS RELEASE IMMEDIATELY

On Friday, August 21, the Whitman County Health Department was notified of a positive Influenza A test in an 18 year old Washington State University student. Since then, over a dozen cases of Influenza A have been diagnosed in local provider offices, urgent care clinics and the Pullman Regional Hospital emergency department. No hospitalizations or serious complications have been reported at this time.

Since May of this year, over 95% of Influenza A cases in the United States have been the Novel H1N1 ("Swine Flu") sub-type. It is likely these recent Influenza A cases locally are the Novel H1N1 sub-type as well.

Symptoms of Novel H1N1 flu include the sudden onset of a fever, usually over 102 degrees, and a cough or sore throat. These symptoms occur in over 95% of cases. Headaches, body aches and muscle pain also occur. Very young children may also have vomiting and diarrhea with H1N1.

Several groups of people are at especially high risk for complications from H1N1 flu. These include pregnant women, people with asthma and chronic lung disease, those with cardiovascular disease, and folks with conditions that impair the immune system. Young children, under the age of two, and older adults, over the age of 65, may also be considered high risk.

A vaccine for the Novel H1N1 Influenza is currently undergoing clinical trials. It won't be available until the middle of October at the earliest. Efforts to limit the impact of H1N1 must focus on preventing further spread. Here is a list of what you can do now to prevent the spread of H1N1:

If you are well and do not have the flu -

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your fingers to your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Don't share with others things you put in your mouth. This includes drinking and eating utensils as well as smoking materials.
- Wash surfaces that are touched by other people, such as door handles, railings, etc, on a regular basis. No special cleanser is required.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve rather than your hands. Dispose of used tissues immediately and wash your hands.



- Consider limiting your exposure to large groups of people if you are pregnant, have a chronic medical condition or immune system impairment.
- Make a plan now for work or school absence if you or your child were to catch H1N1 flu.
- Surgical masks are not useful as a protective measure for well persons and are not recommended.

If you are sick with symptoms of H1N1 flu -

- Stay home. Minimize the number of people with which you have contact.
- Rest and drink lots of fluids.
- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) to reduce fevers and help with body aches. Do not use aspirin due to the possibility of Reye Syndrome.
- Wear a surgical mask to protect others from your coughs and sneezes if you must be out or if seeking medical evaluation.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve rather than your hands.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Do not return to school or work until 24 hours beyond complete resolution of your fever without the use of fever reducing medicines (acetaminophen or ibuprofen).

Seek medical care for yourself if you have flu symptoms and any of the following –

- Difficulty breathing or severe shortness of breath
- Sudden chest pain
- Signs of dehydration such as lightheadedness or near fainting when standing
- Persistent vomiting and inability to keep fluids down
- Confusion
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- CALL BEFORE YOU GO – please call your provider prior to presenting at the office or emergency room for evaluation

Seek medical care for your child if they have flu symptoms and any of the following –

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- CALL BEFORE YOU GO – please call your provider prior to presenting at the office or emergency room for evaluation

Stay up to date on the latest regarding Novel H1N1 Influenza by visiting these web sites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention H1N1 page (<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>)

Washington State Department of Health H1N1 page (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm>)