

Macomb Township Fire Department

Fire and Life Safety Tips

November 2009

Pandemic!



It is the 6th season of the year! The one that people dread the most...

1. Winter
2. Spring
3. Summer
4. Fall
5. Construction
6. Flu

The big question for a lot of people is whether or not to get the flu shot and determining if it is going to work. This month's installment attempts to provide information to help readers make this decision. Please seek medical direction from your doctor as it pertains to your health.

Normally three strands of the flu are chosen each year in advance to be included in the current year's flu vaccination. This year's seasonal flu vaccine does not include the H1N1 swine flu strain. So if you're interested in getting this vaccine, you must get it separately.

WHAT IS THE 2009 H1N1 (swine flu)?

This is a new influenza virus that was first detected in the United States in April 2009. It is currently spreading person-to-person worldwide. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization signaled that a pandemic of 2009 H1N1 was underway.

This virus was originally referred to as "swine flu" because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to the influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs (swine) in North America. But further study showed that the new virus is very different from what normally occurs in North American pigs. It has two genes from flu viruses that normally

circulate in European and Asian pigs along with bird (avian) genes and human genes. Scientists call this a “quadruple reassortant” virus.

A sign that someone has the 2009 H1N1 could include fever. However, there have been people infected with the virus who have respiratory symptoms without the fever. Other symptoms include: cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, vomiting and/or diarrhea.



Whether you are concerned with the seasonal flu or swine flu, there are precautions you should take to help avoid the flu.

The number one thing you can do is frequently wash your hands. There is a commercial out that shows a person rubbing a toothbrush on public things as ATM buttons, stair railings, light switches, door handles, and hand-holds in a bus, etc. This person then puts the toothbrush in their mouth. The commercial then suggests this behavior is the same as eating without washing your hands.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick with the flu.

There are flu medications out there that may work if you have the flu, or work as a preventative if you take them after being exposed to someone with the flu.

Clean door knobs, light switches, faucets, refrigerator handles and change the bathroom towel.



The flu can be deadly. Each year the flu is reported to be responsible for almost 36,000 deaths. Certain people are at “high risk” of serious complications – People with compromised immune systems, those with certain chronic medical conditions, those suffering from asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, and people over 65. Young children and pregnant women should be extra careful.

There is a lot of information out there. Consult your physician for clarification. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a very credible source for health information. Please visit them at: www.cdc.gov

Another site to visit is: www.pandemicflu.gov

STAY SAFE!

REFERENCES

Iannelli, Vincent, M.D., About.com Pediatrics, Flu Season Update – Swine Flu Update 2009-2010 Season, October 26, 2009, retrieved: October 28, 2009.

2009 H1N1 Flu (“Swine Flu”) and You, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, October 20, 2009, retrieved: October 28, 2009.

Macomb Township Fire and Life Safety Initiative