

To Our Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento Physicians:

Introduction:

Sacramento County is experiencing widespread infection with H1N1 influenza. As of July 16, there were over 200 cases county-wide, resulting in 23 hospitalizations and 2 deaths. With return to school right around the corner, there is concern that we may see another wave of infection due to this virus. Here is a summary of current recommendations from the Sacramento County Health Department, Society for Healthcare Epidemiologists of America, and the CDC specific to our region.

Signs and Symptoms:

As with seasonal flu, H1N1 flu presents as a **febrile illness with respiratory symptoms** (cough, sore throat, stuffy or runny nose, malaise, headache). These symptoms can last up to 7 days.

At Risk Populations:

Like seasonal flu, severe illness and death have been reported. There are certain people at higher risk of flu-related complications. These include:

- Children **less than 5 years old**;
- Persons aged **65 years or older**;
- Children and adolescents (less than 18 years) who are **receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye syndrome** after influenza virus infection;
- **Pregnant** women;
- Adults and children who have **chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders**;
- Adults and children who have **immunosuppression** (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV);
- Residents of **nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities**.
- **Obesity**

Who to Test:

Testing is not needed unless the results of the test are going to alter your course of treatment. The best approach is to consider anyone presenting with these symptoms as infected

with H1N1. If you do choose to test, nasopharyngeal specimens should be obtained.

A positive Influenza A screening test should be considered positive for H1N1. For severely ill patients, it is not recommended to wait for test results to begin treatment.

Who to Treat:

CDC recommends early, empiric antiviral treatment for hospitalized patients or high-risk outpatients (see above) with suspect, probable or confirmed H1N1 infection. Either oseltamivir or zanamivir is recommended. Persons with mild disease with no underlying health conditions do not require treatment. For pregnant women treatment is recommended.

Prophylaxis:

Either oseltamivir or zanamivir can be considered for close contacts of cases (confirmed, probable or suspect) that are at high risk for complications of the disease. There are no indications for pre-exposure prophylaxis.

Infection Control:

To prevent transmission of this disease, **the most important message for your patients, your staff and yourself is to stay home if ill.** Sacramento County Health Department recommends staying home until afebrile for at least 24 hours, as long as the individual can control the cough and/or respiratory secretions. This virus is **spread via droplets and direct contact with contaminated services.** **Rigorous hand hygiene and periodic cleaning of contaminated surfaces with any disinfectant will reduce the risk of transmission.** Symptomatic patients presenting to your office can simply wear a surgical mask while in the office. Having hand hygiene products immediately available to your patients, staff and yourself increases the likelihood hand hygiene will occur.

Cecilia Hernandez, M.D., Director, Medical Affairs, is the Physician representative to this Team and would be happy to answer any questions at (916) 733-8332



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