



New Mexicans Urged to Be on Watch for Swine Flu

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is urging New Mexicans to be on alert for an unusual strain of swine influenza that has been confirmed in numerous states and several countries.

While as yet no cases have been confirmed in New Mexico, our neighboring state of Texas has reported cases and New Mexico's health officials believe increased surveillance will likely lead to confirmed cases in the state.

Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus. Although rare, human infections can occur. Recently, cases of a new strain of the swine flu H1N1 virus have been confirmed. This virus has not previously been documented anywhere in the world and there is no vaccine to prevent it. The virus appears to be transmitted person-to-person. It is not transmitted by food and persons cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products.

The NMDOH has asked physicians and hospitals to be vigilant in collecting specimens from patients who present with symptoms of influenza-like illness. In particular, the NMDOH is asking health care providers to ask patients with flu symptoms about their recent travel history to Mexico or other countries or states where cases have been confirmed.

The NMDOH has also issued a public health advisory for New Mexico travelers to Mexico, where hundreds of swine flu cases have been reported. While in Mexico, travelers should wash hands frequently, avoid close contact with persons who are coughing or otherwise appear ill, and avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth. Upon return from Mexico, persons should contact their physician if they develop influenza-like symptoms.

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to seasonal influenza and include fever greater than 100 degrees, body aches, coughing, sore throat, respiratory congestion, and in some cases, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. Laboratory confirmation is required to determine whether an individual has regular seasonal influenza or the new swine flu.

NMDOH officials remind New Mexicans to continue to observe routine public health recommendations for preventing the spread of flu including the following:

- Wash hands often to protect yourself from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; germs are often spread when a person touches a contaminated object and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home from work, school, and running errands. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Contact your physician if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms. Some antiviral drugs may be used to treat persons who become ill with swine influenza.

The NMDOH has set up a phone bank for persons with questions about swine flu. The toll-free number is 1-866-850-5893. Phones will be answered from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. Hours may be expanded as necessary.

Additional information on swine influenza is available by visiting the [NMDOH](#) Web site at and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention swine flu Web site at www.cdc.gov/swineflu, or by calling your local county health department.

Swine Flu

New Mexico Department of Health **Increases Efforts to Look For Swine Influenza Cases**

Questions about swine flu? Call the New Mexico Department of Health hotline at **866-850-5893**.

Information for clinicians and the public:

[U.S. Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) information and updates](#)
or call 866-850-5893.

[New Mexico Department of Health](#)

[World Health Organization info on global response](#)

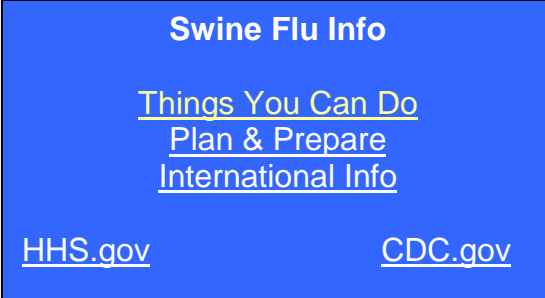
[Google Swine Flu map tracker](#)

News Articles:

[Department of Health Increases Efforts to Look For Swine Influenza Cases
“No Cases Have Been Reported in New Mexico So Far”](#)

[NY Times: U.S. Declares Public Health Emergency Over Swine Flu](#)

[Governor Bill Richardson Reports that New Mexico is Ready to Respond if
State Gets Swine Flu Cases](#)

A blue rectangular graphic with white text. At the top, it says "Swine Flu Info". Below that, it lists three items: "Things You Can Do", "Plan & Prepare", and "International Info", each with a yellow underline. At the bottom left, it says "HHS.gov" and at the bottom right, it says "CDC.gov", both with white underlines.

Swine Flu Info

[Things You Can Do](#)
[Plan & Prepare](#)
[International Info](#)

[HHS.gov](#) [CDC.gov](#)