



# County of Santa Cruz

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## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

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### Press Release

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**For Immediate Release:**

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### *First Probable Cases of H1N1 2009 (Swine Flu) in Santa Cruz County*

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**May 22, 2009** – Two residents of Santa Cruz County have tested positive for H1N1 (swine flu). These are the first probable cases of H1N1 2009 (swine flu) in Santa Cruz County. One person, a 37 year old male lives in the north county area, his test took place on May 6, 2009. He is now fully recovered. The second is a 16 year old female from south county, who was tested on May 14, 2009, she has also fully recovered. As a precaution, close contacts of the patients have been identified and appropriate control measures to contain the spread of the disease have been implemented.

The correlation between probable cases and confirmed cases is very high, and the Health Department is responding as if the cases were confirmed. As a precaution, close contacts of the patients have been identified and appropriate control measures to contain the spread of the disease have been implemented.

Dr. Poki Namkung, Health Officer for Santa Cruz County explained, "The swine flu virus, like the seasonal flu, spreads easily from person-to-person. We expected that it was only a matter of time before we had a case in Santa Cruz County." She continued, "We are fortunate that these cases and most cases in other parts of California have been mild to moderate."

Swine flu spreads the same way as seasonal flu, mainly through coughing or sneezing by infected people. The symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of regular seasonal flu - fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and tiredness. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting with swine flu. Anyone with severe or prolonged symptoms should contact his or her doctor. Dr. Namkung adds, "If you are not suffering severe symptoms, please stay home so you don't infect others."

There is currently no preventive vaccine for swine flu. However, antiviral medications are effective in treating swine flu once a person becomes ill. Most people who have become ill in the United States have recovered without hospitalization or use of antivirals. According the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), treatment with antivirals should be reserved for the severely ill and the most at-risk groups.

Dr. Namkung emphasized, “Now that we have evidence that swine flu virus is present in Santa Cruz County, prevention efforts to reduce the spread of the disease are even more important. Controlling the spread of an infectious disease like swine flu is a shared responsibility - individuals have a key role in reducing their own likelihood of getting infected.”

### **Recommendations for Preventing the Flu (Fever and cough or sore throat)**

- First and foremost—Stay home when you are sick (fever and cough or sore throat). This will prevent others from catching your illness. If you are sick, do not return to work or school until 1 or 2 days after symptoms end.
- Avoid close contact with others as much as possible (two arms lengths away).
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, and always wash your hands afterwards or use alcohol-based hand cleaners.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

### **Seeking Medical Care**

- People with mild illness should NOT go to emergency rooms, urgent care or hospitals for treatment.
- Keep Emergency Rooms and Hospitals free to treat serious illnesses.
- Please do not request antiviral medication for routine illnesses - providers will prescribe treatments based on symptoms and possible exposure. There is still regular seasonal flu in California, and these antivirals will not be effective with normal flu.
- If you have flu-like symptoms call your health care provider and let them know of any possible exposure. Wear a mask before you enter your provider’s office. Your health care provider will make an assessment and decide if you need a test for Swine Flu. Laboratory testing is recommended for people with severe flu-like symptoms.

### **Don’t Give Aspirin to Children for Flu Symptoms**

- Don’t give children medication that contains aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) because it can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye’s syndrome.
- For relief of fever or other symptoms, give children medicines without aspirin, such as:
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)
  - Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®)
  - Naproxen (Aleve®)

The swine flu situation is constantly evolving. Santa Cruz County Department of Health Services continues to respond to changes in the scope and spread of the illness. Beginning with notification of the first human cases in the United States, County officials have worked quickly to update local health care providers and to educate the public about steps individuals and the community can take to prevent the spread of swine flu. County officials are working with cities, emergency services, health care providers and other organizations to create a coordinated response to swine flu in Santa Cruz County.

More information about swine flu available at:

- [www.santacruzhealth.org/swineflu](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/swineflu) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Residents may also call our information line at (831) 454-4343.
- CDPH Swine Flu page <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/SwineInfluenza.aspx>
- CDC Swine Flu page [www.cdc.gov/flu/swine](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine)

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has activated a toll-free swine flu hotline in English and Spanish. Assistance in other languages is also available. The phone number is 1-888-865-0564. CDPH's swine flu hotline is available Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on weekends from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.