

Media Release
Tuesday, April 28, 2009

No Local Cases
- Health Unit and Local Hospitals Work Together to Monitor Swine Flu -

While there have been no laboratory confirmed cases of swine flu locally, the Health Unit and area hospitals continue to work together to monitor the potential of illness.

Cases of swine flu have been confirmed in Mexico, the United States and other countries. In Canada, cases have been confirmed in British Columbia, Alberta and Nova Scotia. Provincial officials today reported four laboratory confirmed cases of swine flu in Ontario.

“The Health Unit is working very closely with our hospitals and health care providers to continue to review and increase surveillance of anyone who is ill with influenza-like symptoms,” says Dr. Lynn Noseworthy, Medical Officer of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

As well as providing the updated provincial protocols for surveillance, the Health Unit has been providing resources and additional information to health care providers and hospital staff.

“This is a very new and emerging strain of the influenza virus and so we are working to make sure our hospitals and health care providers have the information and tools we all need to deal with this evolving issue,” Dr. Noseworthy said.

Northumberland Hills Hospital

“Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is following the Ministry of Health’s case-finding screening tool to monitor for patients presenting with influenza-like illness (ILI),” says Helen Brenner, Vice President, Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive.

“As per the Ministry of Health’s guidelines, we are asking patients with ILI symptoms if they have traveled to Mexico or any affected area within the last seven days. We are also asking if they have had contact in the last seven days with a sick person who has traveled to Mexico or an affected area.”

As per the hospital’s usual practice, additional precautions, including isolation, will be observed for any patients with ILI or suspected to have an influenza-like illness. To date, Northumberland Hills Hospital has no known confirmed cases of the H1N1 swine influenza.

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Residents who have recently traveled to any of the affected areas **and** who may be experiencing influenza-like illness, are urged to contact their health professional and be sure to mention their recent travel. Individuals experiencing symptoms may also contact TeleHealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

A provincial public inquiry line has also been set up for members of the public to call – 1-800-476-9708. The Public Health Agency of Canada has also set up a 24 hour a day hotline 1-800-454-8302 where people can call for more information.

The Health Unit and Northumberland Hills Hospital remind everyone of the importance of practising good hygiene. Always:

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and hot water or use an alcohol-based hand rub;
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze;
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm;
- Stay home if you are ill;
- Ensure all family members get their annual flu shot.

“As we are still in the midst of the annual influenza season we are still seeing people who may be suffering from the traditional influenza virus,” Dr. Noseworthy said. “It is more important than ever at this time to encourage anyone who is ill with influenza-like illness to stay at home to help protect their co-workers and other members of the community.”

Additional information, including links to the Public Health Agency of Canada, the US Centre for Disease Control and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care can be found on the HKPR District Health Unit's website at www.hkpr.on.ca.

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