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May 1, 2009

Questions and Answers About H1N1 (Swine Flu)

Are there any known probable cases of the H1N1 flu virus at Cal Poly?

As of May 1, there have been no known cases or probable cases.

Is the university communicating with public health officials?

University officials have been in constant contact with San Luis Obispo County public health officials.

What is the university doing to prepare for a possible H1N1 outbreak?

An executive team meets daily to review and update current information. Timely and relevant updates are posted on the Cal Poly News Web site as necessary. The university has a comprehensive plan ready for communicating information in the event of an outbreak. As well, university health officials have a plan in place.

How will the campus community be notified in the event of an H1N1 case?

Faculty, staff and students will be notified immediately via direct campus email as soon as a probable case is identified. Other notification measures will be taken as well, including posting of signs around campus. Students have indicated that the most effective way to communicate with them is through direct e-mail.

Is the Cal Poly Health Center available to assist with possible H1N1 cases?

The Health Center is currently screening and treating students as it normally does. Health and Counseling Services is prepared to respond to an on-campus outbreak through a variety of operational changes, depending on any outbreak.

Is the university taking any extra precautions to help mitigate the spread of H1N1?

The university has issued a campus-wide memo to faculty, staff and students on how to keep from contracting and spreading flu, as well as information for after-hours care facilities. This information is also posted on the Cal Poly Web site, along with links to the CDC. Special informational campaigns in University Housing are underway to help mitigate the spread of illness. Additionally, custodians are focusing on disinfecting high-contact areas from bathrooms to doorknobs and light switches.

What can I do to avoid contracting H1N1?

University health officials recommend the campus community follow the Centers for Disease Control precautionary instructions for institutions of higher education:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze;
- Throw tissue in trash after you use it;
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaner is also effective if soap and water aren't readily available;
- Avoid close contact with sick people, including kissing, sharing eating utensils, or drinking from the same container;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth – germs spread this way;
- If you get influenza-like illness symptoms, stay home from work or school except to seek medical care. Also, limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Is it advisable to wear a mask?

Centers for Disease Control are recommending masks for health officials and anyone exhibiting signs of upper

respiratory illness. For more information about using masks to mitigate H1N1, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/masks.htm>.

Should I use soap and water to clean my hands or hand sanitizer?

Washing hands with soap and water is the most effective way to clean hands. Hand sanitizer is an effective option when soap and water are not readily available for cleansing. Hand sanitizers are no more or less effective than soap and water. See "What can I do to help keep from contracting H1N1?" (above).

What are the symptoms of H1N1?

According to the Centers for Disease Control, H1N1 symptoms are similar to regular influenza symptoms.

Symptoms may include:

- Fever (usually high);
- Headache;
- Extreme tiredness;
- Dry cough;
- Sore throat;
- Runny or stuffy nose;
- Muscle aches;
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, also can occur but are more common in children than adults.

Will the university close if a member of the campus community is reported to have a probable case of H1N1?

Cal Poly will work with county health officials and respond appropriately.

Will the university notify parents and family members if their student contracts H1N1?

Under normal circumstances you will not be contacted. Medical privacy laws prevent the university from notifying parents about their adult children's health issues. In the case of a serious illness, you may be contacted if you are listed as the student's emergency contact. If a student is experiencing flu-like symptoms, the university is following county health department recommendations. According to the San Luis Obispo County Health Department if an individual meets any of the following criteria, they should contact their healthcare provider:

- Have a fever higher than 37.8°C (100°F) and a cough and/or sore throat;
- Have had contact with a confirmed swine influenza A case;
- Are in a high-risk setting for transmission (e.g., school, prison);
- Are part of a cluster of people with Influenza-like Illness;
- Have returned from Mexico within 7 days of beginning of illness or cared for ill household members with this travel history.

Where can I learn more about H1N1?

Visit the following Web sites for extensive information about H1N1 including precautions, symptoms, treatment, health protocols etc.

San Luis Obispo County Health Department

<http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/page8402.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov>

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.org>

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California Polytechnic State University

San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

805.756.7266

polynews@calpoly.edu

