



PUBLIC HEALTH BYTES

Henrico Health Department's Newsletter

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Working in partnership
with the citizens of
Henrico County to create
the conditions for health.

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Pandemic Flu - ALERT PHASE WHO: 5

Testing for Novel H1N1 in Virginia

Since late April 2009 to the present (5/29/09), 29 cases of novel H1N1 have been confirmed in Virginia, with 0 cases confirmed in Henrico thus far. The Virginia Department of Health is asking for assistance from healthcare providers to focus testing efforts on patients with fever (100° F or greater) and acute onset of respiratory infection symptoms (cough, sore throat or rhinorrhea) or with sepsis-like syndrome who (1) require hospitalization, OR (2) appear to be associated with a cluster of respiratory illness in a group setting (i.e. two or more cases in a nursing home, daycare, or similar settings). Testing through the state lab is not for individual diagnostic purposes but for public health surveillance. If health care providers have questions about testing patients outside the specified guidelines, you can contact the Henrico Epidemiology team at 501-4522.

Sentinel providers who are part of Virginia's regular flu surveillance network are collecting specimens from patients with influenza-like illness who are at high risk for complications or are healthcare workers. This testing approach will help us monitor for changes in circulating flu viruses.

Antiviral Treatments for Influenza

The results of influenza testing at the Virginia's public health laboratory indicate that both novel influenza A (H1N1) and seasonal influenza strains are circulating, including B, influenza A (H3N2) and seasonal influenza A (H1N1). Because seasonal and novel influenza strains have different patterns of antiviral resistance, it is recommended that clinicians use either zanamivir (Relenza®), or a combination of oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) plus rimantadine or amantadine to provide adequate empiric treatment for patients or chemoprophylaxis for close contacts who are at high risk for complications from the flu. Due to concerns about the overuse of antivirals resulting in additional resistance, prioritization of antiviral medications is advised. Information about treatment and prophylaxis recommendations may be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm> and will be updated as more information becomes available.

Novel H1N1 Vaccine

CDC is currently developing candidate vaccines to the novel H1N1 flu strain that may result in a vaccine available this fall. The vaccine will be separate from the seasonal flu vaccine that is already in production. The novel-H1N1 vaccine will likely be distributed through the State and Local Health Departments. Henrico Health Department will be coordinating closely with our local healthcare and emergency response community to distribute the vaccine according to the priority groups to be determined by CDC. We will keep you updated. For more information, see <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>.

Infection Control Tips for suspect H1N1

The bullets below are highlights from the *current* infection control recommendations from CDC. Guidelines are subject to change; please check the website listed.

- If a patient is sick with a flu-like illness, he/she should stay home for 7 days after symptoms begin or until he/she has been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.

In the health care settings:

- Ill persons should wear a surgical mask to contain secretions when outside of the patient room.
- All healthcare personnel who enter the rooms of patients in isolation with confirmed, suspected, or probable novel H1N1 influenza should wear a fit-tested disposable N95 respirator or better. Respiratory protection should be donned when entering a patient's room. Avoid re-using disposable facemasks and N95 respirators if possible.
- All healthcare personnel who enter the patient's room should take standard and contact precautions as well.
- See: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidelines_infection_control.htm

Henrico Updates

Henrico Health District would like to thank **Dr. Robert Stroube** for filling in temporarily as the Acting District Director for Henrico. We would also like to thank **Dr. Bill Nelson**, the Chesterfield Health District Director, for serving as our current Acting Director as recruitment for a full-time Director is on-going.

Emergency Preparedness

Hurricane preparedness: Brochures provided by the March of Dimes have been added to our Public Health Bytes website: [Emergency Preparedness for Pregnant Women](#) and [Emergency Preparedness for Families with Infants](#).

Mass Dispensing Drill: A test of the emergency medication distribution plan using Henrico Pharmacies will take place at 6pm on 6/28/09 at the CVS at 9501 Woodman Road.

Henrico's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC): The MRC continues to seek volunteers to join the MRC. Please see <http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/mrc.html> for more info.

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