

Swine Flu (SF)

April 28, 2009

IMPORTANT POINTS

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a general travel advisory against non-essential travel to Mexico
- **Agent:** Influenza A (H1N1)
- **Description:** an acute febrile (fever) illness, in its most severe form progressing to pneumonia with respiratory failure
- **Symptoms:** fever, chills, fatigue, headache, cough, chest pain, muscle aches; occasionally shortness of breath, diarrhea, confusion
- **Transmission:** most probably due to close respiratory contact (within coughing/sneezing distance 10-20 feet). Hand transmission (body fluid contamination) may also play a role, so careful handwashing after physical contact with others is advised.
- **Death Rate:** 7% so far, but the extent of mild disease cases or cases without symptoms is unclear at this time (so the death rate may be lower).
- **Incubation Period (time from exposure to illness):** unknown, but probably 2 – 5 days
- **Contagious Period (risk to infect others):** 1 day prior to and up to about 7 days after onset of illness

GENERAL ADVICE

- a. Exposure to Endemic Swine Flu (SF) Regions/Travelers
 - 1). Avoid travel to and through the SF endemic areas.
 - 2). If travel is unavoidable,
 - a). Minimize interpersonal human contact.
 - b). Consider conducting meetings by conference call.
 - c). Conduct essential in-person meetings in as largely ventilated areas as possible (avoid intimate environments with marginally circulated air, such as small conference rooms or work areas).
 - d). Avoid in-person meetings with anyone who has traveled to risk areas within the past 10 days, particularly if they have had symptoms of respiratory illness (described above), or if they have had contact with anyone with such illness who has traveled to risk areas within the past few days. Ascertaining this obviously requires fact-finding prior to meetings.
- b. If you develop SF symptoms and have traveled to risk areas within several days of symptom onset or have had close contact (see above) with someone with SF-type problems who had

Swine Flu (SF)

traveled to risk areas within several days of your contact with them, call an infectious diseases specialist immediately.

- c. Consider carrying an *N-95 respiratory mask* during high-risk travel in case of unavoidable or inadvertent SF exposure. An example would be passing through endemic locations with lengthy waiting in public areas with significant human exposure, *such as airport lounges or gate areas*. International Medicine Center has these readily available.

For more information, visit these websites:

CDC: www.cdc.gov

WHO: www.who.int/en/

Edward R. Rensimer, MD, FACP
Director, IMC

(713) 550-2000 Telephone
(713) 973-0805 Facsimile
imc@traveldoc.com