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Contact: Putnam County Health Department

Putnam County Health Department Implements Plan for Swine Flu Should Cases Evolve

Putnam County Health Department is taking significant steps to deal with a new strain of swine flu, also known as the H1N1 virus, which has prompted federal officials to declare a nationwide health emergency. Missouri received confirmation from the Centers for Disease Control on May 1 that a woman in Platte County who recently traveled to Mexico had tested positive for the swine flu.

“We have been planning for possibility of a major flu outbreak for several years and we are now putting that plan into effect,” said **Ericka Klingner, Administrator**. “We are working closely with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and local medical providers to detect any possible cases in our area. Currently no cases have been reported, but we are ready should cases occur in our county.”

Missouri has stockpiled enough antiviral medications to treat more than 600,000 cases of swine flu. Those medications have now been distributed to each county in the state, including Putnam County.

Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. People do not normally get swine flu. But once it is transmitted to a person, it often can be spread to others through coughing and sneezing.

“There are basic measures that people can do to protect themselves, their families and communities from this virus,” said **Ericka Klingner**.

People can limit the spread of swine flu by:

- Washing hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash after using it.
- Trying to avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Staying home from work or school if you come down with the flu and limiting your contact with others to keep from infecting them.

The symptoms are similar to the regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also report diarrhea and vomiting.

If you have recently traveled to areas reporting swine flu cases, or have been in direct contact with someone who has, and have influenza-like symptoms, contact your health care provider. Two common antiviral medications are available that are effective in fighting the virus and reducing the severity of flu symptoms.

More information can be found at <http://www.putnamcohealthdept.org> or the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Web site at www.dhss.mo.gov/BT_Response/SwineFlu09.html.

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