



Swine Flu: Worst Yet to Come?

H1N1 outbreak serves as wake-up call for pandemic preparedness

The H1N1 swine flu outbreak continues in the U.S. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports more than 10,000 cases and 17 deaths from the disease. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services counts 38 cases in the state, including one death. The victim, a 44-year-old man from St. Louis County, had traveled to Mexico in recent weeks. Three people from St. Charles County have also been infected with H1N1 swine flu, but all three have since recovered.

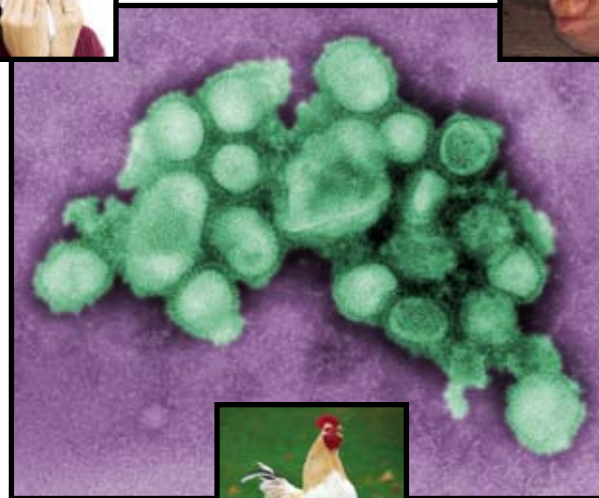
While the vast majority of infections cause only mild illness, similar to seasonal flu, there is still concern that the H1N1 virus could come back with a vengeance this fall. That's why the CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO) have been working on a "seed stock" to create a swine flu vaccine. However, it could take four to six months before the vaccine is ready.

There is also concern about vaccine manufacturing capacity. Pharmaceutical companies do not have the capability to produce both swine flu and regular seasonal flu vaccine at the same time. Health and Human Services Secretary

Kathleen Sebelius says steps are being taken to boost production of seasonal flu vaccines, which could later be shifted into pandemic injections "if that is necessary." However, the secretary added that the United States has not placed advance orders for H1N1 flu vaccine, as have several European countries.



Despite its "swine flu" label, researchers say the 2009 H1N1 virus actually contains genes from human, bird, and swine influenza



"There is still so much uncertainty about this virus that it is really premature for us to even make a determination about how many people would appropriately be vaccinated, in what order, how many doses will be required, at what point. All those discussions are still very much underway," Sebelius said.

Meanwhile, the WHO has indicated it will leave the worldwide Pandemic Alert Level at Phase 5, which indicates an "imminent" pandemic. The WHO scale differs from the CDC scale in that it only takes into account the geographic spread of the flu virus, not its severity.

For continuing updates on the H1N1 swine flu situation, visit

www.scchealth.gov/swineflu.

From the Director



Gil Copley

The traditional swimming and boating season is about to launch. That means that we will be flocking to lakes, rivers, beaches and swimming pools, some of us to relax, some of us to play and many of us to do both. Outdoor recreation is a valuable part of a healthy lifestyle. But there are risks; avoidable, but risks nonetheless.

I know, we all get tired of hearing how "everything" will hurt us. But the fact is life is full of risks and we are constantly avoiding them or reducing them as best we can. We use our intelligence, guided by experience, to have a good time and avoid life's pitfalls.

If you plan to swim, boat, or just lay by the water and work on a tan, the Centers for Disease Control has a new resource page that may make you wiser and safer. If you are so inclined, take a few minutes to look it over. Just go to www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming.

Have a great summer!

To read other articles, click on [From the Director](#)



National Men's Health Week is June 15-21

Be a Man... Be Healthy



Did you know that, on average, men are less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than women? Part of the reason for this health gap is that men don't take care of themselves as well as women do. Men are more likely to engage in unhealthy behavior, and less likely than women to adopt preventive health measures. Men are also less likely to have health insurance, more likely to work in dangerous occupations, and often put off going to the doctor even when they really should go. As a result, men die younger - and in greater numbers - of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and many other diseases. In 1920, women outlived men by an average of one year. Today, that difference is more than five years.

"There is a silent health crisis in America," says Dr. David Gremillion of the Men's Health Network. "It's a fact that, on average, American men live sicker and die younger than American women."

More than half of premature deaths among men are preventable. But you can't prevent a problem if you don't know it exists. That's where National Men's Health Week comes in. The observance, which runs from June 15 to 21, is designed to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys.

Taking better care of your health starts with knowing your risk factors. Risk factors are things in your life that increase your chances of getting a certain disease. Some risk factors you cannot change, such as your age or family history. But many are in your control. Find out what you can do to lower your risk factors and improve your overall health. Next, find out how often you should see a doctor for routine checkups and what screenings, tests, and vaccines you might need. By taking these steps, you will feel good knowing you are doing all you can to take charge of your health.

For more information on National Men's Health Week, log on to www.menshealthweek.org.

Learn Not to Burn

Skin cancer continues to be a problem across our country. Fortunately, it is also one of the most curable cancers. As always though, prevention remains the best medicine. The best way to prevent skin cancer is to protect yourself from the sun. Children should be protected from an early age, as the majority of our lifetime sun exposure happens in childhood.

It is best to stay out of the sun from mid-morning to late afternoon whenever you can. You also should protect yourself from UV radiation reflected by sand, water, snow, and ice. UV radiation can go through light clothing, windshields, windows, and clouds.



If you do need to go out, use sunscreen. Sunscreen may help prevent skin cancer, especially broad-spectrum sunscreen that filters

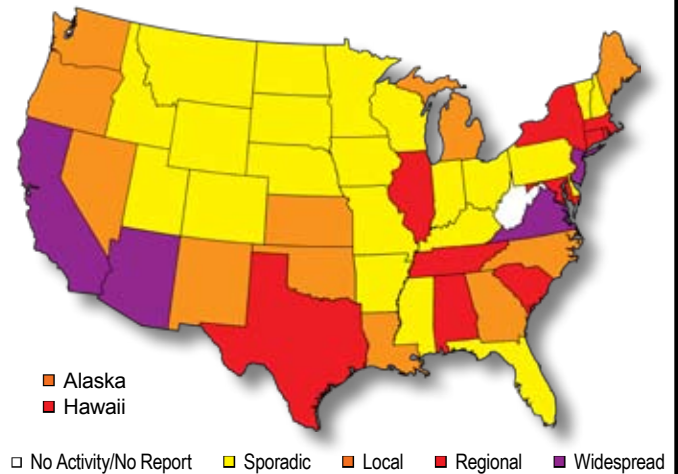
UVA and UVB rays with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Children and people with fair skin may need a higher SPF. Remember to reapply sunscreen as often as directed on the label.

When possible, wear long sleeves and long pants of tightly woven fabrics, a hat with a wide brim, and sunglasses that absorb UV.

Finally, stay away from sunlamps and tanning booths. No matter how "healthy" it looks, a tan is your skin's way of reacting to damage caused by UV rays.

H1N1 Flu Update

CDC report for the week ending May 23, 2009.
Follow [this link](#) for the latest map.



St. Charles County
Government Offices
will be closed on
Friday, July 3 for the
Independence Day
holiday

Eat Fresh

Editor's Note: This article is another from the series Live Like Your Life Depends On It, a new public education campaign from the Live Well Message Alliance and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.



Shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables at a local farmers market or growing your own in a backyard garden is a great way to add flavor to your meals and improve your health.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are full of nutrients – vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants – that can help prevent a number of diseases, and the fresher they are, the better they taste.

When fruits and vegetables are in season, they not only have more flavor, they also cost less. Because a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help prevent serious illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer, planning your meals around produce from a farmers market or your own garden can help you reduce health care costs, too.

The most economical way to consume more fruits and vegetables is to eat seasonally by shopping for produce that's in season and grown locally, if possible. For example, look for asparagus, leaf lettuce, spinach and peas in the spring; strawberries, blueberries, peaches, peppers, tomatoes and broccoli in the summer; and apples, pears, squash and sweet potatoes in the fall.

Finding a farmers market in Missouri has gotten easier in recent years. Last year, Missouri was home to more than 130 markets, compared to just 53 markets ten years ago, according to the state Department of Agriculture. A directory of farmers markets throughout the state can be found by clicking [this link](#).

Gardening is also a good way to increase physical activity, another important factor in maintaining good health. For the do-it-yourselfers, a small backyard garden can produce many pounds of fruits and vegetables every year. Even planting a couple of tomato plants in a pot on a deck or patio can provide fresh tomatoes for salads and sandwiches all summer long.

Getting family members to eat more fruits and vegetables can sometimes be a challenge, but getting them involved is a good way to help them make healthier food choices every day. Research shows that kids who help shop for fruits and vegetables or help grow them are more likely to eat them.

For more information about eating healthy, visit www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov.

Time for Spring Cleaning!

Do you have old, unused chemicals tucked away in your garage or in a dark corner of your basement? The Department of Community Health and the Environment is helping St. Charles County residents dispose of these dangerous substances through monthly household hazardous waste collection events at Recycle Works Central. The next collection event is scheduled for Saturday, June 27 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Recycle Works Central is located at 60 Triad South Drive in St. Charles.

How can you determine what's hazardous? Look for the words "Warning" or "Danger" on the label. Handle these items carefully, following instructions on the label, and bring them to Recycle Works Central for proper disposal. Improper disposal of leftover chemicals (down the drain, in storm sewers, on the ground, or in the trash) can pose a public health risk and be especially harmful to the environment.

Household hazardous waste accepted during the monthly collection events includes motor oil, antifreeze, gasoline and other fuels, pesticides, herbicides, solvents, aerosols, batteries, and pool chemicals.

For a complete list of items accepted, visit our website at www.scchealth.org/es or call (636) 949-7415. If you can't make it on June 27, other collection events are scheduled for July 25, August 29, and September 26.

Household hazardous waste collection events are for St. Charles County residents only. Businesses and non-profit groups are prohibited by law from participating. Proof of residency, such as a driver's license or tax bill, is required. Limits may apply to certain items. Unacceptable items include latex paint, explosives and ammunition, radioactive waste, medical waste, pressurized gas cylinders, household trash, and tires.



Helpful Phone Numbers

Division of Public Health	WIC
(636) 949-7400	(636) 949-7402
Health Education	Recycle Works Central
(636) 949-7401	(636) 949-7900, ext. 4267
Vital Records	Recycle Works West
(636) 949-7558	(636) 949-7900, ext. 4271
STD Prevention/Treatment	Division of Humane
(636) 949-7401	Services
Office of Environmental Health	(636) 949-7387
and Protection	Animal Control
(636) 949-1800	(636) 949-7347

Children in youth sports at risk of concussion

Heads Up! Play It Safe

More than 38 million boys and girls participate in organized youth sports across the country. And while sports can be a fun way to socialize and instill values such as teamwork, physical activity can also mean potential injuries. Coaches, parents, and athletes all need to recognize and manage injuries - especially concussions - if we want our kids to be part of a safe, winning team.

Concussions are one of the most commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreation activities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that as many as 3.8 million sports-related concussions occur in the United States each year. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

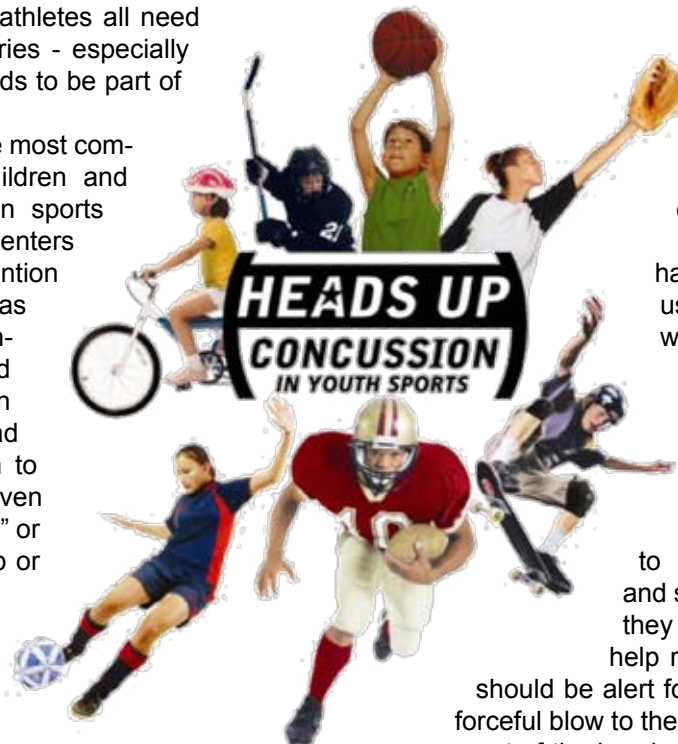
Concussions can occur in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity and can result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goal-

post. Concussions can happen even if a child is wearing a helmet.

In response, CDC has developed the Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to increase awareness and knowledge among youth sports coaches and administrators about concussion and the need to manage concussions appropriately.

As part of the campaign, CDC has developed practical, easy-to-use information for coaches as well as sports administrators, athletes, and parents, including fact sheets, a clipboard, magnets, and posters. Best of all, these materials are available at no cost.

It's important for coaches to become familiar with the signs and symptoms of a concussion so that they can respond appropriately. To help recognize a concussion, coaches should be alert for any athletes who experience a forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head and any demonstrated changes in an athlete's behavior, thinking or physical functioning. The "Heads Up" materials provide a comprehensive list of signs and symptoms of concussion as well as important steps to take when a concussion is suspected. For more information about the Heads Up campaign, or to order free materials, visit www.cdc.gov/features/concussion.



Pet Adoption Center Gets "Benched"



St. Charles County Chief Animal Control Officer Scott Green, right, shakes hands with Boy Scout Kody Gurlen. The O'Fallon teen built four convertible picnic benches for the Pet Adoption Center's dog run area as part of his Eagle Scout project.



Fireworks Safety

Fireworks are an integral part of Fourth of July celebrations, but they can also be dangerous. Every year, nearly 6,000 people end up in a hospital emergency room during the Independence Day holiday season with fireworks-related injuries.

If consumer fireworks are legal where you live and you decide to set them off on your own, be sure to follow these important safety tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks
- Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from buildings, dry leaves, and other flammable materials
- Never try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned
- Keep a bucket of water on hand in case of a malfunction or fire

The 4th For Your Pet

Independence Day is fun for humans, but not necessarily for your pet. The loud bangs and booms can frighten them, causing them to run away.

- Keep your pet secured indoors. Even the best behaved dog will jump fences when scared and cats will run away to hide. In their panic, normally friendly animals may try to bite. Many will run into traffic or run long distances.
- Put your animal in a pet crate and put them in a dark room with the door closed. Panicky animals may hurt themselves or damage property when not securely confined.
- If your dog is normally kept outside, bring them indoors or into a well-ventilated garage with plenty of cool water.
- Don't assume your pet won't react because you haven't had problems in the past. Many animals develop sensitivity to loud noises later in life.
- Make sure your pets are wearing an identification tag and/or microchip. Cats can safely wear an ID tag when it is attached to a break-away collar.