

La Paz County Health Department

Marion Shontz, Director

*Public Health Emergency Response
and Preparedness (PHERP) Office*
1320 Joshua Ave.
Parker, Arizona 85344



*Environmental Health Office
Public Health Nursing Office*
1112 Joshua Avenue #206
Parker, AZ 85344

PHONE: (928) 669-9364
FAX: (928) 669-1939

PHONE: (928) 669-1100
FAX: (928) 669-6703

For Immediate Release

Contact: Cathleen Turnbow
Public Information Officer
(928) 669-9364
(928) 669-1939 fax
ctaber@co.la-paz.az.us

09/11/2009

1430

LA PAZ COUNTY SEES INCREASE IN H1N1 ACTIVITY

La Paz County, AZ- The past two weeks have brought an increase in influenza like illness through out La Paz County. On Thursday September 10th the La Paz County Health Department received confirmation of 4 new confirmed cases of H1N1. The new cases bring La Paz County's total count to 5 since April 2009. All the cases are in the 5-24 year age range. The total number of confirmed cases in Arizona is 1,347 as of September 9th.

“We have seen an increase in confirmed cases,” said Marion Shontz, Director of the La Paz County Health Department. “It is consistent with the rest of the state of Arizona. We are seeing an increase in influenza like symptoms everywhere.”

This is expected and not a cause for panic. This strain has not mutated and the fatalities (including the pediatric cases) are associated with underlying health conditions. If you are experiencing flu symptoms STAY HOME. Do what you normally do when you get the flu. The virulence has been shown to be no worse than regular seasonal flu at this time. If you do not normally go to the ER when you get the

regular flu, there is no need to do so now unless you are having trouble breathing or controlling fever.

Several people have called the La Paz County Health Department seeking information on being tested for the novel H1N1 influenza virus. Testing for the virus is not done at the health department. Only people who are hospitalized with H1N1 like symptoms will be tested, confirmed and counted. Rapid testing can be done at the doctor's office for influenza A, but it cannot be distinguished between H1N1 and seasonal type A, and therefore cannot be counted as a confirmed case.

“The reason we are not testing everyone with symptoms is because we know that H1N1 is circulating in the community. We also know that seasonal flu is circulating. Chances are if you have symptoms of flu you have either H1N1 or seasonal flu and treatment is the same for both,” explained Diana Grazier, Director of Nursing for the La Paz County Health Department.

While the Novel H1N1 vaccine is not yet available, anti-virals such as Tamiflu and Relenza are very effective in treating flu symptoms. However, anti-virals are only available through prescription, should not be used to prevent flu, are only effective if taken in the first few days of symptoms and are only given to people who are experiencing serious symptoms.

La Paz County Health Department is anticipating more confirmed cases of Novel H1N1 but there are prevention measures that can keep those numbers down. Simple basic measures can help stop the spread of influenza and protect our community.

- Use good hygiene: Cover your coughs and sneezes with a disposable tissue or use your sleeves. Don't cough or sneeze into your hands. Coughing and sneezing into your hands without washing them immediately can spread germs to other surfaces and to other people. Wash your hands frequently throughout the day or use hand sanitizer when hand washing is not available.
- Stay home when sick: This year 1 in 4 people may get sick with the flu so plan accordingly. Stay home if you are sick and keep sick kids home too. You or your child should stay home until fever free (at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications) and have a plan to be home possibly up to 7-10 days. Talk with your employer now about company policies.
- Have healthy habits: Get plenty of rest, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and exercise. Our first defense is our body's immune system. Keep it as healthy as possible.

For more information on H1N1 go to www.stopthespreadaz.org Let's work together to keep our children and community healthy.

###