

August 19, 2009

**Note: For distribution to all
physicians and midlevel practitioners
in your office.**

To: San Joaquin County Medical Providers
From: Karen Furst, M.D., M.P.H., Health Officer

INFLUENZA UPDATE

Exclusion of Persons with Influenza-like Illness

On August 6, 2009 the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated recommendations for the time people should be away from others if they have influenza-like illness (ILI). This notice is to help you give guidance to your patients with symptoms of influenza. Note that there is no recommendation that testing be done. These recommendations are based on symptoms of influenza illness alone. The new recommendations are as follows:

For non-health care settings (such as schools, businesses, camps, churches, and other community settings):

- People should stay at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever **and** are not taking medications for fever or flu symptoms which could mask a fever. For most people this will require them to stay home for at least 3-5 days.

For health care settings (such as hospitals, clinics, and skilled nursing and assisted living facilities):

- The exclusion period is recommended to remain at 7 days or 24 hours after resolution of acute symptoms, whichever is longer.

For non-health care settings with large numbers of people who have high risk medical conditions (such as a school or classroom for special needs or medically fragile children):

- In these settings the longer exclusion time of 7 days should be considered. Please contact San Joaquin County Public Health Services for further guidance on such settings (209/468-3822).

Attachment: CDC Health Advisory

This is an official CDC Health Advisory

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CDCHAN-00297-09-08-06-ADV-N

CDC Updates Recommendations for the Amount of Time Persons with Influenza-Like Illness should be Away from Others

On August 5, 2009, CDC changed its recommendation related to the amount of time people with influenza-like illness should stay away from others (the exclusion period). New guidance indicates that people with influenza-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). A fever is defined as having a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit or 37.8° Celsius or greater.

This is a change from the previous recommendation that ill persons stay home for 7 days after illness onset or until 24 hours after the resolution of symptoms, whichever was longer.

The new recommendation applies to camps, schools, businesses, mass gatherings, and other community settings where the majority of people are not at increased risk for influenza complications. CDC recommends this exclusion period regardless of whether or not antiviral medications are used. This guidance does not apply to health care settings where the exclusion period continues to be for 7 days from symptom onset or until 24 hours after the resolution of symptoms, whichever is longer. (See http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidelines_infection_control.htm for guidance on infection control in health care settings.)

Decisions about extending the exclusion period should be made at the community level, in conjunction with local and state health officials. More stringent guidelines and longer periods of exclusion – for example, until complete resolution of all symptoms – may be considered for people returning to a setting where high numbers of high-risk people may be exposed.

This exclusion period guidance for the community setting is based on epidemiologic data about the overall risk of severe illness and death. The new recommendation attempts to balance the risks of acquiring illness from influenza and the potential benefits of decreasing transmission through the exclusion of ill persons with the goal of minimizing social disruption. This guidance will continue to be updated as more information becomes available.

To read the complete revised guidance see: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/exclusion.htm>

This change in our recommendation has affected content on a number of other pages, including the following:

Visit http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm for more information on caring for sick persons in the home.

Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm> questions and answers about H1N1 influenza.

For more general information on H1N1, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu>.