

Dedicated to Outstanding Customer Service for a Better Community

S E R V I C E S O L U T I O N S S U C C E S S

March 25, 2011
Department of Public Health
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Armando Saldivar (915) 771-5718 Cell: (915) 355-5234



Department Urges Vigilance Against Influenza in Wake of Recent Reports
Number of Cases Continues to Increase on Both Sides of the Border

El Paso, Texas – In light of the recently released flu statistics, and because of growing concern regarding the virus in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, the City of El Paso Department of Public Health continues to remind residents in El Paso that preventing the spread of influenza is a major priority. This year the number of confirmed cases of influenza for the month of January is 357 (only 3 of which are cases of H1N1) and 302 in February (26 of which are cases of H1N1). While those numbers are significantly higher than the number of cases reported during this same time in 2009 when the H1N1 influenza pandemic was noted, the Department is highlighting important contributing factors.

Those factors include greater influenza testing, case detection, and reporting by area medical providers. As a result of the H1N1 pandemic, last year the Department began requiring local medical providers to report confirmed cases of the flu. This has resulted in improved reporting and surveillance. While this is not a state requirement, health officials in El Paso made the decision to require this reporting in order to monitor emerging public health threats.

“At this time, there is no indication that the flu viruses circulating in our community are novel or more aggressive than strains we have seen in the past. We have no reports of death as a result of the flu this season.” said Dr. Hector Ocaranza, El Paso Health Authority. “Because the number of flu cases is so high and prevention may not be in everyone’s minds at this time of the year, we want to remind our citizens of the importance of personal prevention measures,” he added.

Officials with the Department of Public Health are advising residents to continue with the same recommendations they have been promoting since October of last year, at the start of the flu season. This includes vaccination of both children and adults with a seasonal flu vaccine which provides protection against all circulating strains, including 2009 H1N1. We are currently offering the flu vaccine for children and appointments can be made by calling (915) 771-5822. Adults are urged to visit flu.gov to find local retailers that are offering the flu vaccine.

In addition to getting immunized, the public can do their part by practicing the “Four C’s”:

- **CLEAN**-Wash your hands often. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- **COVER**-Cover your cough. Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Don’t have a tissue? The crook of your elbow will do.

(-MORE-)



5115 El Paso Drive - El Paso, Texas 79905 - (915) 771-5702
Where Health Knows No Borders



Mayor
John F. Cook

City Council

District 1
Ann Morgan Lilly

District 2
Susannah M. Byrd

District 3
Emma Acosta

District 4
Carl L. Robinson

District 5
Rachel Quintana

District 6
Eddie Holguin Jr.

District 7
Steve Ortega

District 8
Beto O'Rourke

City Manager
Joyce A. Wilson

*Public Health
Director*
Michael Hill

Dedicated to Outstanding Customer Service for a Better Community

S E R V I C E S O L U T I O N S S U C C E S S



- **CONTAIN**-Contain germs by steering clear of others who are sick. If you do get sick, stay at home until you're well again so you don't spread more germs.
- **CALL**-Call or see your doctor if you or your child has a fever greater than 100 degrees.

Some citizens, considered to be especially vulnerable, are those in the high risk groups. They include:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- People who have:
 - Asthma
 - Cancer
 - Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)
 - Chronic lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and cystic fibrosis)
 - Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus)
 - Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure, and coronary artery disease)
 - Kidney disorders
 - Liver disorders
 - Neurological and neuro-developmental conditions (including disorders of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve, and muscle such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy (seizure disorders), stroke, intellectual disability [mental retardation], moderate to severe developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, or spinal cord injuries)
 - Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
 - Neuromuscular disorders (such as muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis)
 - Weakened immune systems due to disease or medication (such as people with HIV or AIDS, cancer, or those on chronic steroids)
 - People younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.

The Department continues to maintain close communication with health officials in both Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico. Any additional precautions or recommendations will be shared between the two countries and local officials will pass that information along to local providers as well as the citizens of El Paso if and when they become necessary.

More tips and information can be found by visiting the Health Department's Flu Prevention page at <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/health/h1n1.asp>

###

Mayor
John F. Cook

City Council

District 1
Ann Morgan Lilly

District 2
Susannah M. Byrd

District 3
Emma Acosta

District 4
Carl L. Robinson

District 5
Rachel Quintana

District 6
Eddie Holguin Jr.

District 7
Steve Ortega

District 8
Beto O'Rourke

City Manager
Joyce A. Wilson

Public Health Director
Michael Hill

