



COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

Health Disaster Management Emergency Medical Services



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Hospital Emergency Rooms Feel Impact of H1N1 Alert

(Santa Ana) – Hospital emergency rooms in Orange County are busy; due in part to concern related to worldwide alerts for H1N1 Influenza A virus (Swine Flu).

“Emergency rooms are reporting an increase in visits for possible H1N1 Influenza A virus infection, resulting in longer waits and, in some cases, an increase in the number of hospitals that temporarily close their emergency rooms to new patients being transported by ambulance, a condition we call diversion,” said Samuel J. Stratton, MD, MPH, Medical Director for Orange County Emergency Medical Services. “We need the public’s help in limiting emergency room visits to those that are medical emergencies, so that resources can be used to care for seriously ill patients.”

Presently, there has been limited spread of H1N1 Influenza A virus in the United States. Most people presenting to emergency rooms with viral illness symptoms are not at high risk for H1N1 Influenza A virus infection. Common viral illnesses do not require medical attention. Typical care may include acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever, drinking enough liquids to prevent dehydration, eating light meals and getting adequate bed rest. If symptoms persist or worsen, individuals should contact their personal physician or regular health care provider. Indications of more serious illness that might need immediate medical care include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Severe vomiting
- Excessive drowsiness
- Fever over 100 degrees, especially in young children, the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions
- Signs of dehydration in children include being unable to take adequate amounts of fluids, crying without tears, and urinating less often than normal.

Limiting the spread of possible influenza and other viral illnesses is important. To help prevent the spread of viruses:

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands frequently and before possible close contact with others who may be ill
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth and then touching others without washing your hands
- Don’t share eating utensils, drinking glasses or other personal items
- Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms of flu-like illness

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