

United States is Experiencing A Flu Epidemic

The United States is experiencing a flu epidemic that is concentrated in Mexico, but is spreading to other countries. Cases have been identified in California, **all of which have been described as "mild"**. Because this is caused by an airborne flu virus, it is reasonable to expect more cases. There have been no reported cases in Los Angeles County as of today.

Symptoms of flu include fever, cough, body aches, and less commonly, vomiting and diarrhea. **If you experience any of these symptoms, stay at home. If your symptoms are severe or you become concerned, call your physician. It is critical that you minimize contact with others while you are sick to keep from passing the infection.**

As with any other flu epidemic, we recommend the following to help avoid infection with flu viruses:

The first defense against the spread of organisms is **effective hand washing**. Most organisms are spread from the hands to the mouth, nose and eyes, thus infecting the respiratory and gastro-intestinal systems. **Soap, running water (at any temperature), and spending at least 15 to 20 seconds actively washing** all areas of the hands are all part of effective hand washing.

Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and wash your hands afterward. Ask those around you to do the same or distance yourself from others who are coughing or sneezing.

If you become ill, stay at home until the symptoms have lessened. If you are over 65 or have chronic medical illnesses, communicate your symptoms to your physician.

Eat well balanced meals, get enough rest, and drink plenty of water. This helps to keep your immune system strong.

There are medications available to lessen the severity and length of viral illnesses such as the flu. **Contact your physician if you develop a high fever, cough, and body aches.**

Seek emergency care if you develop difficulty breathing, dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen.

Fortunately, the number of cases reported in California has remained [relatively small](#) over the past several days, indicating that the virus is not spreading rapidly nor is it very virulent. This event is, however, evolving on an hourly basis. City emergency planners are in frequent contact with county health officials. We are also receiving regular updates from the CDC and World Health Organization. The City will notify employees and residents as soon as we have information to add to that already being provided by the mass media. Additional information may be found at the County Public Health website www.lapublichealth.org . Questions may be directed to Division Chief Jim Frawley, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at 626.300.0739.

Thank you for doing your part to stop the spread of this disease.

John Penido, Fire Chief

Good resources include:

www.lapublichealth.org

www.cdc.gov

www.cdph.ca.gov