

## **County Health Department Monitoring Swine Flu**

### **Local News**

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : April 27, 2009 at 9:20 am

Local health officials are on alert and closely monitoring the evolving swine flu outbreak in Mexico following identification of cases in five U.S. states (California, Texas, Kansas, New York City, and Ohio) in the past week. They are working closely with health care providers and state and federal health officials to identify cases of influenza to see if they are due to this new infection. They are also ramping up their level of readiness to respond to public health needs if there is a serious threat to the public's health. No cases have been identified in Grays Harbor County or Washington State, but that may change as health officials begin to take a closer look. "We're paying close attention, and we're prepared to respond to any local needs out of an abundance of caution," remarked Dr. John Bausher, the Grays Harbor County Health Officer. "But we're very aware that so far this has been a mild illness for people in the U.S. Unless the situation changes dramatically, the risk appears to be very low."

People infected with this new swine flu have looked very much like people who have other types of influenza A. The illness is characterized by fever and sore throat or cough, and may also include body aches, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Health officials recommend that all people with influenza, regardless of the type, stay home from work or school to avoid infecting others. Cover your nose and mouth when you need to cough or sneeze and throw tissues in the trash when you are done with them. Wash your hands in warm water and soap often, especially after you cough or sneeze. "We would like people with influenza symptoms who have recently been to Mexico or affected areas in the U.S. to contact their health care provider and discuss their symptoms and travel history," says Bausher. "Depending on the individual circumstances, some testing or treatment may be appropriate." The same medications that help reduce the length and severity of typical influenza are effective against this new virus. The medicine is typically used to prevent serious flu complications and is given in the first two days of the illness. Public Health has posted information about the swine flu on their website at <http://www.ghphss.org/> and will be soon post a way for people to ask questions via email. Additional information is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).