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## Red Cross Urges Preparedness during Swine Flu Outbreak

**Tuesday, April 28, 2009** — The recent documented cases of swine flu in several states across the U.S. and in a growing number of other countries may cause many people to wonder what they can do to better protect themselves right now.

As health experts around the world seek to better understand the scope and severity of the swine flu outbreak, this is a good time for individuals, families, businesses and organizations to review and update their emergency preparedness plans.

### Stay Healthy

The Red Cross and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are offering the following tips to ensure you stay healthy:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective when soap and water aren't available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way. Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Influenza (flu) is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Consult your healthcare provider if you develop symptoms of the flu, such as:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Extreme tiredness



- Vomiting and/or diarrhea

For more information, see the Red Cross Flu Checklist.

### **Prepare for Potential Flu Outbreak**

Stocking extra food, water and supplies at home will reduce the need to go out should swine flu become more widespread, thereby limiting potential for exposure to the virus. If a person does get sick and has extra supplies on hand, they will help reduce the spread of the flu by staying home.

- Store a two-week supply of food, water and household necessities (such as laundry detergent, toilet paper, etc.). Select foods that are easy to prepare and store.
- Store one gallon of water per person per day in clean plastic containers. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles.
- Insure that formula for infants and any child's or older person's special nutritional needs are a part of your planning. Store an extra supply of food for your pets.
- Make sure you have an adequate supply of essential medications and medical items for all family members.

The Red Cross recommends you take this opportunity to prepare your family for any disaster by getting a preparedness kit, making a plan and being informed. More information is available on the Red Cross Web site.

Up-to-the-minute updates on the swine flu can be found at the CDC Web site. People seeking information on human swine flu should visit the CDC Web site or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

### **About the American Red Cross:**

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and counsels victims of disasters; provides nearly half of the nation's blood supply; teaches lifesaving skills; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its humanitarian mission. For more information, please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or join our blog at [www.redcrosschat.org](http://www.redcrosschat.org).*

### **Related Links**

- Flu Checklist [English version, PDF]
- Seguridad contra la gripe [Español, PDF]
- Prepare for events: Pandemic Flu



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