



News Release
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SLVHD Reports Significant Increase in H1N1 Cases *Increase is counter to national trend of decreasing cases*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – While many areas across the country are beginning to report a decrease in the number of H1N1 cases, health officials at the Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) today report seeing a significant increase in the number of cases and health officials are, once again, urging residents to continue following recommended precautions. Since the outbreak began, Salt Lake County has had 330 cases and two deaths.

"As anticipated, the infections have caused hospitalizations and deaths," says Gary Edwards, executive director of the SLVHD. "And, from our most recent data, I can say that H1N1 activity in Salt Lake County has not peaked, as it may have in the rest of the country."

More than 32 county residents have been hospitalized with H1N1 flu since late April. A preliminary analysis of hospitalized patients reveals that 41% of the cases have at least one of the underlying conditions listed by the CDC that puts them at higher risk of severe illness or complications from influenza. When two additional conditions are included – obesity and/or children under the age of 2 years – the percentage of hospitalized cases with underlying conditions jumps to 72%.

"So far, the most common risk factors in Salt Lake County have been asthma – an underlying risk factor among 21% of the hospitalized cases, and pregnancy – a risk factor among 9% of the hospitalized cases," explained Dr. Dagmar Vitek, Medical Director for SLVHD.

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) continues to be an illness affecting younger individuals. The initial data indicate the majority of H1N1 cases in Salt Lake County are between the ages of 5 and 24, with the average age being 16, which is consistent with national trends.

"This outbreak is by no means over," Edwards explains. "Public health will continue to follow and investigate the illness, and gather more information as it progresses."

SLVHD recommends that people with asthma, or other chronic lung conditions, heart disease, diabetes or those who are immuno-compromised or pregnant, call a doctor right away if they develop flu-like illness. Antiviral medicines, if taken early (preferably within the first two days of symptoms), can help reduce the risk of severe illness and complications.

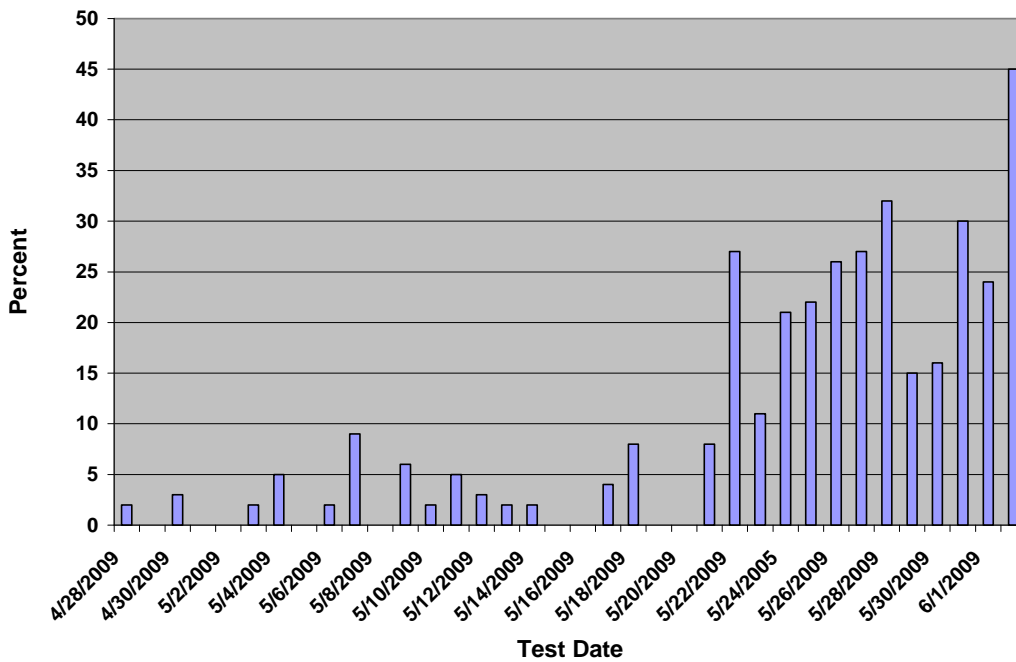
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SLVHD wants to remind residents to continue taking preventive measures such as covering coughs and sneezes, coughing into your sleeve, avoid touching your nose and eyes, and frequent hand washing with soap and water. Staying home when you are sick and avoiding close contact with others will help keep your family and friends healthy.

For more information on the H1N1 influenza, visit the SLVHD website at www.slvhealth.org.

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Percent Positive Influenza A Tests



Influenza A activity is based on information from
Intermountain Healthcare Germ Watch
provided by Per H Gesteland, M.D., M.S.
at Primary Children's Medical Center