

Subject: MOH PRESS RELEASE ON HIGHLY INFECTIOUS SWINE INFLUENZA VIRUS IN MEXICO AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

Republic of Botswana

27/4/09

BGCIS Forwarding - FYI- Please find Press Release below, which has been released by the Ministry of Health

PRESS RELEASE ON HIGHLY INFECTIOUS SWINE INFLUENZA VIRUS IN MEXICO AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

As of April 24, 2009 WHO reported a flu like illness in Mexico which was responsible for more than 882 cases and 62 deaths due to pneumonia, following the surveillance that started on the 18th March, 2009. The virus responsible for this infection was confirmed to be Swine Influenza type A/H1N1. This death toll rose to 103 by the 27th of April, 2009. So far beside Mexico, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Israel, France, Spain are also affected by the virus.

This virus is contagious and spreads from infected pigs to humans and from human to human through respiratory droplets.

It may also be spread when a person touch respiratory droplets on another person or on an object and then touches their own mouth, eye or nose, before washing their hands.

Signs and symptoms of Swine Influenza are:-

- * Fever (greater than 37.8°C)
- * Sore throat
- * Cough
- * Stuffy nose
- * Chills
- * Headache and body aches
- * Fatigue
- * Chest pain, and
- * Difficulty in breathing
- * Some people may have diarrhea and vomiting

Even though we have had no cases in Botswana, the Ministry of Health advises the public that if any person that has traveled to any of the affected countries or has had contact with any person affected by swine influenza who develops a combination of the above symptoms should report to the nearest health facility for assistance.

In addition the public is advised to take the following precautions:

- o Avoid contact with ill persons suspected of swine influenza.
- o When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (if you do not have a tissue), and throw used tissues in a

trash can, to be disposed properly.

- o After you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- o Keep contaminated surfaces clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant
- o All materials, such as eating utensils, towels, bed sheet used by those who are sick should not be shared without washing thoroughly, with water and soap first.
- o Handle with care all laundries prior to washing, and clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- o Avoid travel to affected areas

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture is making all the necessary preparation to handle any suspected or confirmed cases of swine influenza, in Botswana.

For further information contact the Ministry of Health's toll free number:
0800 600 740

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ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY