

PORTAGE COUNTY COMBINED GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT



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H3N2v: Not the swine flu

The Ohio Department of Health has announced that there are confirmed cases of Influenza A variant H3N2 in the state of Ohio. These cases have been linked to swine exposure with attendance at fairs where swine were present. Influenza viruses such as H3N2 and its variants are not unusual in swine and can be directly transmitted between swine and humans in the same way that viruses are often transmitted between people. As of now, there have been no cases of human to human spread. It is important to understand that this is not the same as 2009's H1N1 influenza and it is not a pandemic flu.

Portage County Health Department states that it is safe to attend the fair

The 2012 Portage County Randolph Fair is coming upon us very quickly. The Portage County Health Department is carefully monitoring the H3N2v situation and is working closely with the Portage County Fair Board to ensure the health and safety of fair-goers during this fair season. DuWayne Porter, Portage County Health Department Health Commissioner said, "We would like to compliment the Portage County Fair Board for their proactive approach in handling this situation. They are going above and beyond in making sure that the swine exhibitors are well educated about the H3N2v as well as taking steps to educate the public attending the fair on safe ways to enjoy the animals." All fair animals are monitored for illness and signs of flu-like symptoms and are checked by veterinarians upon entering the fair and every day they are at the fair. This is done to protect the health of both the people visiting the fair and the other animals in the barns.

It is safe to attend the fair, but use common sense. This flu can be prevented by following simple guidelines.

Those attending the fair should remember:

- Wash hands often with soap and running water before and after exposure to animals. If this is not available, use hand sanitizer that is alcohol-based.
- Never eat, drink, or put things into your mouth while in the animal areas. Do not take food or drink into the animal areas.
- Wash hands before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with animals that look or act sick.
- Avoid contact with swine if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms.
- Consider avoiding exposure to pigs and swine barns if you are a child younger than 5 years of age, an adult 65 years of age or older, pregnant, or have a chronic medical condition such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune system, and neurological or neurodevelopment condition.

Signs of flu in pigs include: coughing (barking), runny nose, sneezing, breathing difficulties, and a high fever.

Signs of flu in people include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, diarrhea, and vomiting.

For additional information, please contact Becky Lehman, PCHD Health Educator at 330-296-9919, ext. 137.