

National Influenza Committee Guidelines for Pet Owners

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health

http://www.bigmedicine.ca/americas.htm#1104_Protecting_pets_from_illness_#ixzz0WOXqkLMq

Saint Lucia National Influenza Plan is available at www.tiny.cc/nip

Past Guidelines in the series are available at...

<http://stlucia.gov.lc/flu/guidelines.htm>

This document provides interim guidance on suggested means to reduce the spread of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. Recommendations are interim based on current knowledge of the H1N1 outbreak, and may be revised as more information becomes available.

Background

In May 2009 the World Health Organisation designated H1N1 as a "*Public Health Emergency of International Concern*" and the virus has lived up to its description. As the National Influenza Committee deepens its response to this flu, Saint Lucians are called upon to partner with the Committee.

The risk of transmission of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus may be spread to pets due to increased proximity and sometimes prolonged contact between people and their animals in an enclosed environment.



This guidance will address general recommendations that apply to all programs and some specific guidance that applies to programs that are residential.

At this time, CDC recommends the primary means to reduce spread of influenza focuses on early identification of the ill. This includes the cooperation of all by staying home and away from others (including pets) when ill, conducting good cough and hand hygiene etiquette, and environmental controls that encourage use of these hygiene practices.

Novel Influenza A (H1N1)

The symptoms of influenza usually include fever plus at least either cough or sore throat. These symptoms are often referred to as an influenza-like illness (ILI). Influenza infection can also lead to additional symptoms like headache, tiredness, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, chills, diarrhea, and vomiting. Like seasonal flu, novel influenza A (H1N1) infection in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. When severe, pneumonia, respiratory failure and even death are possible.

Novel influenza A (H1N1) is thought to spread in the same way that seasonal influenza virus spread, mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the virus. People may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Influenza-Like Symptoms in Pets

The National Influenza Committee reminds Saint Lucians that in addition to protecting their families, friends and neighbors from the spread of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, it's important to remember to protect family pets from the illness, as well. People who are sick with H1N1 can spread the virus not only to humans, but to some animals.

In November 2009 the Iowa Department of Public Health confirmation of a case of H1N1 in an Iowa cat. H1N1 is now being found in ferrets and other non-swine, non-bird and non-human species. While other states with the USA as well as Argentina, Australia, Canada and Chile have all reported the virus in farm animals.

People can keep their pets healthy by washing hands, covering their mouth and nose when they cough and sneeze, and minimizing contact with their pets while ill with

Indoor pets that live in close proximity to someone who has been sick are at risk and it is wise to monitor their health to ensure they aren't showing signs of illness.

Further information...

- For further information call the Ministry of Agriculture: 468-5621/20/24, 450-3213, 454-6254
- If your pet exhibits signs of a respiratory illness, contact your veterinarian.
- For more information about H1N1 visit <http://stlucia.gov.lc/flu>



REMEMBER – YOUR BEST DEFENSE IS YOU!