

## **Swine Flu Guidance for Houses of Worship**

**May 5, 2009**

### **Can my church, temple, mosque or synagogue hold services?**

- Services do not appear to pose a risk at this time.
- We do encourage congregants who are sick to stay at home.
- Congregations should not share utensils or other items, such as a communal cup.

### **If we do hold services, what can we do to limit the risk of infection?**

- Make sure individuals who are sick stay at home.

### **If we hold services, would it be better to hold them outdoors?**

- Common sense tells us there is a smaller likelihood of infection outdoors than a crowded, indoor setting.

### **What should we do if congregants are sneezing or coughing during services?**

- This is an ideal opportunity for spiritual leaders to emphasize that congregants should stay home if ill.
- Urge proper hygiene: wash hands often with soap, cover your mouth or nose during a sneeze or cough.

### **What is swine flu?**

Swine influenza is a respiratory disease caused by type A influenza viruses that cause regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu but humans can become infected. Infection spreads among people mainly through coughing or sneezing, much the same as with seasonal flu.

### **What are symptoms for swine flu?**

- Fever, headache, muscle aches, sore throat, cough, extreme fatigue, runny nose, and loss of appetite. People with swine flu also can have vomiting and diarrhea.

### **What you should do if you think you have swine flu?**

- Stay at home, drink plenty of fluids, rest, and take medicines for fever. Aspirin should not be given to small children.
- Limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- If the virus becomes severe, such as difficulty breathing, fever, pain or pressure in chest or abdomen, or persistent vomiting, the CDC recommends that people seek medical attention. Be sure to notify the health care provider of suspicions that symptoms may indicate swine flu.

### **What can you do to protect yourself and your loved ones?**

- The most important thing anyone can do is wash their hands often with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.

- Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw tissues in the trash.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.