

## Swine Influenza Update:

The Inland Northwest Blood Center (INBC) wants to ensure the safety and availability of the blood supply while protecting the health of our blood donors and of our employees. As you are probably aware, there has been an outbreak of Swine Influenza (Swine Flu), an H1N1 virus, in Mexico and in some areas of the US. INBC is closely monitoring the ongoing situation and is following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

### **There is no risk of getting Swine Flu from the process of blood donation.**

The current strain of influenza, Swine Flu, is infectious to humans and can spread from person to person. Swine Flu, like regular seasonal flu, can vary in severity from mild to severe. Some people, especially if they are already ill, can have more severe side effects.

Symptoms of Swine Flu are similar to the regular human flu and include:

Fever temperature >100°F	Head and body aches
Chills	Fatigue
Cough	Nausea
Runny nose	Vomiting
Sore throat	Diarrhea

People with the flu can infect others up to 24 hours before they know that they are sick and they may continue to spread the flu 7 or more days after they recover from the flu. **People should not donate blood until at least 7 days after they recover from the flu.**

The flu spreads mainly through coughing, sneezing, and respiratory secretions. For example, people may become infected by touching something contaminated with flu viruses on it (like a telephone) and then touching their mouth or nose.

There is not a vaccine available at this time for Swine Flu. **The best prevention against catching the flu is to practice some simple behaviors to avoid catching the flu and to avoid giving the flu to other people.**

1. **Wash your hands** often with lots of soap and water, or with alcohol-based cleansers like gel sanitizers or disposable wipes. The CDC recommends washing vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Wash and clean your hands before you eat and when you touch your mouth, nose, or eyes, or after you touch any surfaces that might be contaminated with the flu virus.
2. **Try to not touch** your eyes, nose, or mouth with your hands. If you must touch your face, wash your hands before you do and try to use a tissue. Afterwards, put the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.

3. If you have to sneeze or cough, **cover your mouth and nose with a tissue**, your sleeve, or your hand. Then dispose of the tissue and/or wash your hands.
4. **Try to avoid close contact** with people who are sick. Keep as much distance between the sick person and yourself as possible, and wash your hands afterwards.
5. **If you are sick, stay home** from work, home, and do not donate blood. **It is vital that other blood donors and employees are not exposed to illness, so that we can all work together to provide blood to sick patients.** If you have a fever and a sore throat, you should stay home and only go out to see a health care provider. Your health care provider can determine whether you need to be tested or treated for the flu. If you must leave your home (for example, to seek medical care) wear a surgical mask to keep from spreading your illness to others.
6. **Take care of yourself.** Drink plenty of fluids and get enough sleep. If you are rundown, you may catch the flu more easily.

**Donating blood saves lives, not only during times like these, but every day.** Attending blood drives should remain a priority for those donors who remain well and healthy, or for donors who are completely recovered from the flu.

For more information and updates about Swine Flu, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>), the CDC 24-hour hotline (800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or your [local health department website](#). You can also follow CDC updates concerning Swine Flu on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/CDCemergency>.