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Travellers With Flu-Like Symptoms Should See Health Care Provider

WHITEHORSE – Yukon residents who have recently returned from Mexico and who are experiencing flu-like symptoms should talk to their health providers,” Yukon Medical Officer of Health (MOH) Dr. Brendan Hanley said.

The swine flu, or H1N1 Influenza A, reported earlier this week in Mexico and the United States has now been confirmed in Canada. So far, all illnesses reported in Canada have been mild.

No cases of swine flu have been reported in Yukon to date. However Hanley says physicians and community health nurses have been advised of what symptoms to look for in any territorial residents returning from Mexico or other affected areas who feel ill.

“This H1N1 virus is a new type of influenza that we will not have immunity to, so it is important to stress good preventative procedures, and medical care for flu symptoms that seem to be getting worse,” Hanley said.

The MOH said that symptoms are similar to seasonal flu including headache, chills, cough, followed by fever, loss of appetite, muscle ache, and runny nose. Individuals returning from Mexico within the past two weeks who have any of the symptoms should contact their family physician, or call the 811 Health Line.

In general, Yukoners who contract flu-like symptoms should stay home and rest for the longer of either seven days, or resolution of their fever and other symptoms. For now, people who have travelled to Mexico or the United States who experience fever with a cough and/or other flu-like symptoms should consult their health provider and let them know of their travel history. In addition, anyone whose flu symptoms are getting worse rather than better should contact a medical care provider.

Hanley said the territory’s emergency health team is in regular contact with the Public Health Agency of Canada, which in turn is working with health officials from the United States and Mexico, where human swine flu cases were first confirmed. The Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart is also briefed regularly, along with his fellow health ministers across the country, and other departmental representatives.

Hanley said prevention is still the best way to prevent illness. Yukoners are advised to wash their hands thoroughly and often, cough into their sleeves and stay away from the public if they are sick. Yukoners contemplating travel to Mexico should keep a close watch on travel notices from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Hanley says they can also call Yukon HealthLine at 811 if they have questions or concerns, or feel ill.

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