

April 30, 2009
NSDA Member Update – Human Swine Flu Outbreak

NSDA staff are monitoring the progression of this outbreak and working closely with the CDA and other provincial dental associations on information-sharing and communications.

Below you will see the most recent CDAlert, issued on April 29th. We encourage all members to review the “Suggestions for Dentists” information contained in the Alert for consideration in their practice.

The NSDA will continue to advise members of the latest information and requirements as outlined by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Health.

Members are encouraged to revisit the Pandemic Planning document posted on the NSDA website at www.nsdental.org under Dentist Resources / Practice Management A-Z / under “P” for pandemic.

As this situation continues to evolve, NSDA communications to members may become more frequent.

Members are reminded to continue to use common sense:

- if you or your staff are sick, stay home
- if patients are sick, re-book appointments;
- if you think you have influenza, phone your doctor
- everyone should use “cough and sneeze etiquette” using your arm or elbow
- everyone should wash their hands frequently

All updates will be posted for continuing reference on the NSDA website at www.nsdental.org under Dentist Resources / Practice Management A-Z / under “S” for swine.

CDAlert – Update on Human Swine Influenza Outbreak



CDA is working to keep Canadian dentists informed about the latest developments on the recent human swine influenza outbreak.

The outbreak originated in Mexico, but has now spread to other countries. As of April 29, the number of confirmed cases of swine flu in Canada are: 4 in Ontario, 2 in Alberta, 4 in Nova Scotia and 3 in British

Columbia.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has issued a travel warning recommending that all Canadians postpone elective or non-essential travel to Mexico until further notice.

The Government of Canada has established a telephone hotline (1-800-454-8302) to handle public inquiries. CDA would also encourage dentists to consult the following websites for the most up-to-date information on this outbreak:

[Public Health Agency of Canada – Latest Information on Human Swine Influenza](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine_200904-eng.php) http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine_200904-eng.php

[Public Health Agency of Canada – Human Swine Influenza Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/faq_rg_swine-eng.php) http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/faq_rg_swine-eng.php

[Organization for Safety & Asepsis Procedures - Swine Flu Resources for Dental Professionals](http://www.osap.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=1216) <http://www.osap.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=1216>

[CDA - Pandemic Flu and the Dental Office](http://www.cda-adc.ca/en/dental_profession/practising/pandemic_flu/default.asp) http://www.cda-adc.ca/en/dental_profession/practising/pandemic_flu/default.asp

Suggestions for Dentists

CDA has received questions from dentists regarding the treatment of patients at their practices. Dentists should continue to observe standard precautions for all patients. This includes proper hand hygiene, the use of personal protective equipment and the disinfection of all equipment and patient contact surfaces. N95 masks should be added to the standard precautions when treating a patient with respiratory symptoms (such as high fever or new/worse cough or shortness of breath) or suspected of having been in contact with swine flu.

CDA would encourage dentists or their staff to screen patients for recent travel history and for symptoms of influenza-like illness, preferably before a patient presents at the dental practice. Dental staff can screen patients when booking and confirming appointments. The dental office must be prepared to segregate patients with respiratory symptoms and who have travelled to an affected area in the last 7 days as soon as they arrive at the practice.

To assist in the screening process, appropriate screening questions, clinical guidelines and signage for the dental office from the Government of Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care can be found here:

[Screening Tool for Influenza-like Illness in the Emergency Department](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/health_notices/ihn_screening_tool_042909.pdf) (PDF) http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/health_notices/ihn_screening_tool_042909.pdf

[Clinical Guidelines for Management of Patients with ILI in Ambulatory Settings](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/health_notices/ihn_gd_ed_042909.pdf) (PDF) http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/health_notices/ihn_gd_ed_042909.pdf

[Signage for Health Profession Offices](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/health_notices/ihn_042609_signage.pdf) (PDF) http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/health_notices/ihn_042609_signage.pdf

CDA also reminds dentists and dental staff to stay at home if they are exhibiting any flu-like symptoms.

To assist dentists further, CDA has prepared the following suggestions, which apply for **elective dental**

treatment(s) only.

For patients who have returned from an affected area in the last 7 days or who have been in contact with someone who has done so, it would be prudent to postpone elective dental treatment for 1 week (7 days).

Patients with influenza-like symptoms (such as fever, new/worse cough or shortness of breath) and who have returned from an affected area in the last 7 days, or who have been in contact with someone who has done so, should seek medical attention right away before being treated by their dentist.

In the above scenarios, if the patient requires **urgent or emergency treatment**, standard precautions plus the use of N95 masks provide appropriate protection to the clinical staff. To avoid contamination of other patients and non-clinical staff, patients presenting a risk should be asked to wear masks and be placed in a segregated area as soon as possible after their arrival.

CDA will continue to provide updates on this developing issue as appropriate.