



April 27, 2009

In the US the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released guidance documents for health care workers and laboratory workers when dealing with a Confirmed or Suspected Swine Influenza A Virus Infection.

The recent occurrence of confirmed cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in the United States and Canada<sup>1</sup> and a recent outbreak of more than 800 cases of Influenza Like Illness (ILI), including confirmed cases of swine influenza virus infection in Mexico<sup>2</sup>, has generated inquires regarding the use of respiratory protection devices to help minimize occupational exposure to swine influenza virus.

On April 24, 2009 the CDC updated their guidance, originally issued on April 20, "Interim Guidance on Infection Control and Antiviral Recommendations for Patients with Confirmed or Suspected Swine Influenza A Virus Infection". They recommend that, until further notice, Healthcare facilities should use the CDC's October 2006 "Interim Guidance on Planning for the Use of Surgical Masks and Respirators in Healthcare Settings during an Influenza Pandemic"

Additionally they specified that the following regarding use of respiratory protection devices:

- "Personnel engaged in aerosol generating activities (e.g., collection of clinical specimens, endotracheal intubation, nebulizer treatment, bronchoscopy, and resuscitation involving emergency intubation or cardiac pulmonary resuscitation) for suspected or confirmed swine influenza A (H1N1) cases should wear a fit-tested disposable N95 respirator.\*
- Pending clarification of transmission patterns for this virus, personnel providing direct patient care for suspected or confirmed swine influenza A (H1N1) cases should wear a fit-tested disposable N95 respirator when entering the patient room.

\*Respirator use should be in the context of a complete respiratory protection program in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Information on respiratory protection programs and fit test procedures can be accessed at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory). Staff should be medically cleared, fit-tested, and trained for respirator use, including: proper fit-testing and use of respirators, safe removal and disposal, and medical contraindications to respirator use."

The CDC also states that personnel providing care to or collecting clinical specimens from suspected or confirmed cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) use appropriate eye

protection, such as goggles, to help prevent conjunctival exposures and other personal protective equipment including disposable non-sterile gloves and gowns.

In Canada a respiratory program should be used in accordance with the authority having jurisdiction in your region and/or CSA Standard Z94.4 Selection, Use and Care of Respirators.

On April 24, 2009 the CDC published “Swine Influenza A (H1N1) Virus Biosafety Guidelines for Laboratory Workers.” Laboratory workers who may be processing or performing diagnostic testing on clinical specimens from patients with suspected swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection, or performing viral isolation should wear respiratory protection, specified as a fit tested N95 respirator or higher level of protection.

The CDC also states that laboratory workers wear proper eye protection, such as goggles or face shields, shoe covers, closed-front gowns, double gloves and any other equipment recommended by the site specific risk assessment.

Copies of the latest CDC documents can be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

For Canadian updates refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada’s website at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

3M has developed a number of resources related to respirator use in the case of an influenza pandemic or outbreak. 3M resources contain useful information that may be relevant to the current situation. Information regarding 3M’s offering of respiratory protection devices for workers can be found at:

[www.3M.ca/safety](http://www.3M.ca/safety)

Additionally, 3M Occupational Health and Environmental Safety Division can be reached at the following numbers

Canadian Technical Service: 1-800-267-4414

Canadian Customer Service: 1-800-410-6880

<sup>1</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/investigation.htm>

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009\\_04\\_24/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009_04_24/en/index.html)