

# News Release

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## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROVIDES UPDATE TO PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS REGARDING SWINE FLU

April 27, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(OTTAWA) Minister of Health Leona Aglukkaq and Chief Public Health Officer Dr. David Butler-Jones provided an update to Canadians on further actions that have been taken by the Government of Canada in the management of the swine flu outbreak. The federal government continues to work closely with the provinces and territories and international partners to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg has confirmed four cases of A, H1N1 swine flu from Nova Scotia. The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control identified two additional cases from British Columbia. All six cases are same strain of human swine influenza that has been found in the U.S. and Mexico. These first cases were detected as a result of the increased surveillance the federal government initiated with the provinces and territories and health professionals given concerns over the spread of swine flu in Mexico and the United States.

“The federal government has taken additional steps to protect travellers and has issued a health alert notice to the airlines that they are now distributing,” said Minister Aglukkaq. “In addition, airlines are making onboard announcements to advise travelers of health precautions. The situation is evolving and we will remain vigilant and continue to monitor the situation closely.”

“We have no new confirmed cases to date and all existing cases have recovered completely from their mild symptoms,” said Dr. David Butler-Jones, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer. “In Canada, we have already increased our activity in several ways. Most notably, we've heightened our surveillance systems to more closely monitor the spread of the disease and we are ensuring that rigorous infection control practices are being implemented to prevent further spread.”

The Public Health Agency of Canada is providing additional support to its international partners. Two Canadian epidemiologists are in Mexico, assisting with testing at that country's request.

Minister Aglukkaq re-iterated the Government of Canada's commitment to ongoing communication with Canadians who are encouraged to access updated information through the Public Health Agency of Canada's website, [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca) or by calling 1-800-454-8302.

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A backgrounder on some of the actions the federal government is taking and the measures Canadians should take to protect themselves is attached.

**Media Inquiries:**

**Également disponible en Français**

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Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

Canada



## INFORMATION

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### BACKGROUND ON GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

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The Government of Canada is taking action on a number of fronts, including:

- **Public Information:**
  - A 1-800 information line, namely 1-800-454-8302, is available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) where Canadians can get more information;
  - A travel health notice and frequently asked questions have been posted to the Public Health Agency of Canada website [www.phac.gc.ca](http://www.phac.gc.ca); and,
  - An information bulletin with health advice is being distributed to incoming travellers to Canada to remind them of simple health precautions
- **Monitoring and Coordination:**
  - The Government's Emergency Operations Centre has been elevated to full activation (Level 4), operating 24 hours a day and seven days a week;
  - Daily coordination and information sharing conference calls are being held with provincial and territorial public health authorities and international partners; and,
  - Officials remain vigilant in screening and reporting of unusual influenza-like illnesses, particularly in travellers returning from Mexico.
- **Laboratory Testing:**
  - Provincial and territorial laboratories have been asked to send any unidentifiable influenza viruses and samples from patients with severe respiratory illnesses to Canada's National Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg, which is now operating 24 hours a day and seven days a week

The Public Health Agency advises Canadians to:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze in your arm or sleeve
- Keep doing what you normally do, but stay home if sick
- Check the [www.fightflu.ca](http://www.fightflu.ca) for more information
- Check [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca) for travel notices and advisories
- Talk to a health professional if you experience flu-like symptoms