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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As public health agencies across the nation continue to focus their efforts on containing the new virus, MDH officials are reminding people that we all have a role to play in limiting the spread of illnesses like H1N1 flu. They are reminding people that you can protect yourself from influenza and other respiratory diseases by staying home if you're sick, covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, washing your hands thoroughly and frequently, and limiting your contact with people who you think might be sick.

Members of the public with questions about the current international outbreak of H1N1 influenza can call the MDH hotline between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 1-800-657-3903.

Wednesday, April 29, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) announced the state's first suspected case of the H1N1 Novel Influenza Virus (formerly known as Swine Flu) in Cold Spring, Minnesota. The City of Prior Lake has no suspected cases of H1N1. City staff is closely monitoring the situation and are prepared to implement an emergency plan if needed. Currently the best strategy is the same as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for seasonal flu, with the exception that there is no vaccine available for H1N1 at this time.

1. Avoid close contact. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
2. Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work, school and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
3. Cover your mouth and nose. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
4. Clean your hands. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

For more information, go to the Scott County website at www.co.scott.mn.us, click on "Helping People & Health," and "Public Health," and find "Emergency Preparedness" on the left column.