



News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Protecting Pets from Illness

Iowa Influenza Hotline: 1-800-447-1985

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) remind Iowans that in addition to protecting their families, friends and neighbors from the spread of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, it's important to remember to protect family pets from the illness, as well. People who are sick with H1N1 can spread the virus not only to humans, but to some animals.

The Departments are sharing this message following the confirmation of a case of H1N1 in an Iowa cat.

The 13-year-old indoor cat in Iowa was brought to the Lloyd Veterinary Medical Center at Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, where it tested positive for the H1N1 virus. The diagnosis is the culmination of collaborative efforts between IDPH, Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine, Center for Advanced Host Defenses, Immunobiotics and Translational Comparative Medicine, USDA, and IDALS Animal Industry Bureau.

"Two of the three members of the family that owns the pet had suffered from influenza-like illness before the cat became ill," said IDPH Public Health Veterinarian, Dr. Ann Garvey. "This is not unexpected, as other strains of influenza have been found in cats in the past." Both the cat and its owners have recovered from their illnesses.

People can keep their pets healthy by washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and minimizing contact with their pets while ill with influenza-like symptoms. If your pet exhibits signs of a respiratory illness, contact your veterinarian.

"Indoor pets that live in close proximity to someone who has been sick are at risk and it is wise to monitor their health to ensure they aren't showing signs of illness," said Dr. David Schmitt, State Veterinarian for Iowa.

For more information about H1N1, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/h1n1/ or call the Iowa Influenza Hotline at 1-800-447-1985.

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