

Swine Flu

Media and officials caused unnecessary panic with the rise of swine flu, or H1N1, in North Carolina. With the swine flu epidemic in full swing people fear that their lives are in jeopardy more than ever before.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, H1N1 is nothing more than a new strain of the flu, that just happens to occur in pigs as well as humans, with very little difference in symptoms. Headaches, body aches, nausea, many have encountered these symptoms each year with the seasonal flu, yet this year people feel it's a sign that they're going to die.

The CDC also reports that there are very simple precautions that one can take to prevent becoming infected, or spreading, H1N1. The basics of avoiding contact with someone who is sick, or covering of the mouth when coughing are among the tips.

Common sense is useful when dealing with any form of influenza virus, H1N1 is not an exception to that rule. Don't drink after people when a virus is around, don't touch your eyes or nose, but people seem to have forgotten these facts.

According to North Carolina officials, there have been over 200 cases of H1N1 in the state, and of those only 12 were fatal. Whereas North Carolina reports thousands of cases of the influenza virus every year.

Media reports hype up the swine flu by focusing on it every day, telling horror stories about the death tolls. CNN reported that more influenza-based deaths were related to the seasonal flu than H1N1. Homeland Security recorded over 30,000 deaths annually in the US from the influenza virus, sometimes more.

And yet, H1N1 is causing more of a stir in the air than usual. We hear about a little over 200 deaths in North Carolina, and assume this flu is bigger than the old strains.

According to the CDC, more people in the 0-24 age bracket are effected by the swine flu. However, they also report that the mortality rates are higher in those under 5 years of age or over 65-years-old.

Those who are in the 5 years and under bracket do not have immune systems strong enough to deal with the flu, without medical attention. The same goes for those over the age of 65, especially if they have a preexisting condition of some sort. Those with high immune systems, young adults, catch the flu more frequently, but usually fight it off and recover.

The H1N1 epidemic is reminiscent of the Avian Flu of a few years ago, and the swine flu epidemic of the '70s. We have survived this type of epidemic before, and if we use any amount of common sense, will easily move pass this one.