

11 dead from H1N1 flu in Bolivia

July 3 2012

At least 11 people in Bolivia have died from H1N1 flu in recent months, with most of the cases occurring in just the past few weeks, health officials here said Tuesday.

Deputy Health Minister Martin Maturano said 873 cases had been reported across the country, and urged Bolivians to take [preventive measures](#), such as eating well and frequently washing their hands.

Bolivian authorities have not said whether the strain of the virus originated as swine or [avian flu](#) -- in other words whether it first spread to humans from pigs or birds.

In 2009, an H1N1 epidemic erupted in Mexico, sparking a worldwide pandemic that caused at least 17,000 deaths.

Bolivia's current outbreak primarily has affected young children, the elderly, and those whose systems are already weakened by illness or [chronic health conditions](#) such as [high blood pressure](#) or diabetes.

Some 471 cases have been reported in the capital, La Paz, while 109 were reported in the neighboring city of El Alto. In total, the La Paz department, the most affected by the outbreak, reported a total of 585 cases through June 30. Santa Cruz, a large department in eastern Bolivia, reported 167 cases.

Eight of the deaths were identified in the department of La Paz department, while the remaining three were in Santa Cruz.

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Citation: 11 dead from H1N1 flu in Bolivia (2012, July 3) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-07-dead-h1n1-flu-bolivia.html>

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