



May 15, 2009

Dear friends of Niños de Mexico,

I realize many of you are or have been worried about the reports of drug-related violence in Mexico as well as the recent outbreak of the H1N1 virus, commonly known as swine flu. Although both are serious situations and there is cause for concern, it is my personal belief and the belief of our staff that neither situation has reached the level of danger as portrayed by most media sources.

I typically choose not to have a reactionary attitude concerning shocking news reports. However, I do not want to be naïve in the face of increased violence and a hybrid influenza virus. That being said, I want to give a few personal comments on the two subjects and point you in the direction of some official reports.

1. Concerning the violence in Mexico, many believe this Latin American country to be relatively peaceful, however it can also be volatile. The chosen method of free speech is to shut down major roads and modes of transportation in order to cause inconvenience until the people can be heard and their wants addressed. Although there have been kidnappings, murders, and other crimes for many years, only recently has the media begun reporting it more accurately. Notice I said 'more' accurately. I believe there has been a minor increase in violence in Mexico, due directly to the government's increased crackdown on drug trafficking and illegal weapons and the desperation of cartels for continued revenue. The 'increase' is mainly due to 'better' reporting. In the articles found on the internet, on television, and in the newspaper, the violence is primarily taking place along the US-Mexico border and not in south-central Mexico, where our mission work is located. Ciudad Juarez, the main news source for Mexico violence, is a border city and major drug trade route. Cartels are fighting each other and the government for control to keep transporting drugs through this city to the US. When violence occurs in other parts of the country, it is almost entirely focused around other drug trade routes, with cartels fighting for control.

San Vicente Chicoloapan, Texcoco de Mora, and San Luis Huexotla, the three home cities for our ministry, have grown in recent years and the crime rate has increased in accordance with that growth, however they are still relatively peaceful communities. Please remember, you are visiting a third-world country when you travel to Mexico.

For official reports on travel and violence in Mexico, check the U.S. State Department website. The following link is a good starting point:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_970.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_970.html)

2. In regards to the swine flu outbreak and my personal opinion I want to refer you to the following internet article:

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2009/04/28/swine-flu>

As mentioned in the article the best preventative measures are:

- Frequent hand-washing (with soap or alcohol-based sanitizers).
- Avoid contact with sick people.

- Possibly wearing a face mask.
- Covering your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and disposing of the tissue immediately.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unclean hands.

Not one of the children, staff, or current visitors is sick with the swine flu virus. No one in our nearby area has been diagnosed with the swine flu virus. We will let you know if this changes.

For an official report on the H1N1 virus and Mexico, check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. The following links are very informative:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/travel-health-warning/novel-h1n1-flu-mexico.aspx>

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_3028.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_3028.html)

At this point, we consider it just as safe to visit Niños de Mexico as it has been in previous years. Our staff has taken precautions through the years and we continue to address these issues regularly to make sure you are safe when you come. The health and safety of our children, staff, interns, and visitors is of the utmost importance to us. We will let you know immediately if we see a potential danger to your coming to visit.

If you, someone in your group, or even a family member have questions and/or concerns related to the violence or swine flu in Mexico and an upcoming visit to Niños, please let us know. We would love the opportunity to address your reservations.

To close this letter I have one more personal comment. Please be sure to avoid the activity in this picture, if you don't want swine flu.



Blessings,

Seth Thomas  
Executive Director  
Niños de Mexico

Office: (636) 583-2000

Cell: (636) 388-2288

eMail: [seth.thomas@ninosdemexico.org](mailto:seth.thomas@ninosdemexico.org)

Web: [www.ninosdemexico.org](http://www.ninosdemexico.org)

P.S. A recent letter from a group leader regarding their April 2009 trip is posted on our website:  
<http://ninosdemexico.org/2009/04/23/recent-short-term-mission-trip-experience#more-514>