



DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

111 North County Farm Road, Wheaton, Illinois 60187

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www.dupagehealth.org

April 28, 2009

Dear Children, Students, Parents, and Staff in Child Care and Schools DuPage County:

You may have seen or heard the recent news about Swine Flu in other counties and in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the DuPage County Health Department are all monitoring the current situation in order to provide the best actions and guidance for our community. **The best thing that we all can do is to remain calm but alert to what we can do to prevent illness.**

Swine influenza, swine flu, is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus. Seasonal flu symptoms include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Reported swine flu symptoms also include runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

The spread of this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

As of this afternoon, there are no cases of Swine Flu in DuPage County but the situation continues to be monitored through health care providers and our hospitals.

If you are returning from travel to Mexico, other effected areas, or have been in contact with someone who is sick, pay close attention to your health. If you become sick with a fever plus a cough, sore throat or have trouble breathing, see a doctor. Stay home if you are sick unless it is to get medical care. By limiting contact with others as much as possible, you can help prevent the spread of an infectious illness.

Since influenza is primarily spread by direct contact with nose and throat secretions, persons may prevent becoming sick with swine flu with a few simple actions:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

CDC has created a webpage with information and updates. Visit www.cdc.gov/flu/swine or call 1-800-CDCINFO. In Spanish, http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/espanol/swine_espanol.htm
You can also visit the DuPage County Health Department Emergency Information webpage at www.protectdupage.org

Sincerely,

THE DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Rashmi Chugh, M.D., M.P.H.
Medical Officer

Maureen McHugh
Executive Director

Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday

In an emergency go to www.protectdupage.org and tune into WDCB 90.9 fm radio.

Schools/Child Care Facilities and Swine Influenza

Questions & Answers

What is Swine Influenza?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza in pigs. Swine flu viruses cause high levels of illness and low death rates in pigs. Swine influenza viruses may circulate among swine throughout the year, but most outbreaks occur during the late fall and winter months similar to outbreaks in humans. The classical swine flu virus (an influenza type A H1N1 virus) was first isolated from a pig in 1930.

What are the current recommendations for ill students at DuPage County Schools/Child Care Facilities?

Currently there is no special guidance for handling of ill students or staff at schools and/or Childcare Facilities at this time for DuPage County Illinois. Similar to other situations, all children who are ill or showing signs and symptoms of flu-like illness should be sent home and instructed to visit and healthcare provider for assessment, testing and treatment if needed.

Should students with a recent travel history to Mexico attend school?

Yes, students, children, and staff, at this time, should not be excluded due to recent travel to Mexico or any other affected area. The CDC does recommend for persons experiencing symptoms consistent with swine flu and have traveled to an affected area, or have been exposed to someone possibly infected with swine flu, during the last 7 days should report their illnesses to their health care provider immediately and inform them of their recent travel.

What precautions should our school/childcare facility take to prevent the spread of disease?

Everyone should be taking the following precautions to prevent the spread of disease:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash you hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Are special cleaning precautions recommended?

Environmental cleaning as a part of a regular routine including cleaning of "high touch surfaces" is recommended during regular influenza season and at other times of high incidence of illness in order to cut down on the number of germs that might be transmitted through environmental objects such as door knobs, hand rails, drinking fountains and other surfaces. Products that eliminate or "kill" influenza should always be used according to their label with safety precautions.

For further information please visit www.protectdupage.org