

Dear Parents:

This letter will give you information about a new swine flu identified in the United States and how that might affect us at Russell School.

Every year, some people get sick with the "seasonal" flu during the fall and winter months. However, there is a new flu virus called swine influenza that is making people sick with the same symptoms as the seasonal flu: fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache and body aches (sometimes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea).

It appears that this new swine influenza can be spread from person to person. You may have concerns, that this swine influenza virus has caused illness and death in some people in Mexico. As of April 27, 2009, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting 40 confirmed cases within the US. It's important for you to know that most people who have gotten sick in the United States have had very mild illness. However, this situation is evolving and we can expect that more cases will be identified.

At present, there are no reported cases of swine influenza in New Hampshire (NH). We want to do all we can to try to prevent transmission within NH and within the school.

Actions you can take —

- **If you or your child has recently returned from an affected geographic area**, monitor for symptoms of influenza for seven days after returning. If symptoms occur, call your healthcare provider for evaluation (be sure to mention your recent travel history).
- **If you or your child is sick, stay home from work or school until you are better.** Keep sick people away from people who are not sick.
- **Tell your school nurse** or administrator about your child's symptoms so they can watch for other students with the same symptoms.
- **Wash your hands well and often.** Make sure your children do the same. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- **If you can't wash with soap and water**, use a hand sanitizer. (Gels, rubs or hand wipes with at least 60% alcohol)
- **Remind children** to keep their hands away from their face - don't touch mouth, nose, or eyes.
- **Cover your cough.** Teach your children to do the same. Cough into the inside of your elbow, or into a tissue — not your hands!

Throw away used tissues or hand sanitizer wipes. Teach your children to throw away tissues and then wash hands.

Don't share water bottles, utensils, cups, food, etc. with others.

If people in your home are sick with the flu and cannot see a healthcare provider, care for them at home — Give plenty of liquids (clear fluids with electrolytes). If you are unsure what over-the-counter medications can be safely used to reduce symptoms, if the ill person is having difficulty breathing, or if they are getting worse, call a healthcare provider.

You can disinfect hard surfaces in your home with a solution made of one ounce bleach to one gallon of water.

For now, school will stay open — At this time, the NH Department of Health and Human Services tells us that students who are not ill can safely come to school, even students with history of travel to affected geographic areas as long as they don't have symptoms.

If the swine flu continues to spread in the U.S. and if it causes severe illness, closing of schools may be considered. The purpose of closing schools is to slow the spread of flu from person-to-person by keeping children at home and away from others.

If you have questions, call your school nurse or healthcare provider. You can call the school information line

It's important to keep informed about what's happening. You can get more information from:

- CDC website at www.cdc.gov/swineflu
- NH Department of Health and Human Services
http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/default.htm
NH Department of Health and Human Services Communicable
Disease Section: 603-271-4496.
Swine Influenza Hotline: 1-888-330-6764
- The federal government keeps current information for individuals and families at www.pandemicflu.gov

Sincerely,





New Hampshire Health Alert Network Health.Alert@nh.gov

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DATE: April 27,2009

TIME: 8:45 PM

TO: NH Schools, AHHR, DPHS Management Team, Investigation Team

FROM: Jose T. Montero, MD, Director of the NH Division of Public Health Services

SUBJECT: Advisory on Swine Flu Outbreak

The New Hampshire (NH) Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is increasing its surveillance efforts in response to cases of swine influenza in the United States. On Sunday, April 26, the federal government declared a public health emergency in order to more readily provide support for ongoing state efforts. At this time, **there** are no confirmed cases of **swine influenza in New Hampshire**.

NH Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) recommends:

- Maintain general health and hygiene activities in your school. Remind all students and staff of the importance of regular hand-washing and use of alcohol hand gels, no sharing of drinking containers, and coughing/sneezing into the elbow.
- Follow normal protocol for any student who presents with respiratory symptoms: send them home and recommend they see their health care provider if necessary.
- If a student has returned from an affected geographic area*, for 7 days following their return, they should report first thing each morning to the school nurse to be screened for symptoms of influenza-1 like-illness* and be advised to return if symptoms develop during the day. It is not necessary to restrict asymptomatic students from school.
- If the student being monitored becomes symptomatic, the student should be restricted from school until they have been evaluated. Please contact NH DHHS Communicable Disease Section 603-271-4496 immediately.
- School nurses should report higher than normal absenteeism to NH DHHS Communicable Disease Section 603-271-4496.
- We do not recommend canceling any events or closing any schools at this time. We recommend consulting with NH DHHS Communicable Disease Section before considering any actions outside of your standard protocols.
- Consider the use of attached parent letter template as an informational tool.

Please refer to the CDC website for daily updates on the outbreak and publication of interim guidance at: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>