



LEWISTON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

36 Oak Street
Lewiston, Maine 04240

April 30, 2009

Tel: 207-795-4100
Fax: 207-795-4177
TDD: 207-795-4100

Dear Parents,

Leon Levesque
Superintendent
207-795-4100

Janice Plourde
Curriculum &
Instruction
207-795-4103

Thomas E. Jarvis
Human Resources
207-795-4100

Melvin Curtis
Special Education
207-795-4108

Dean Flanagan
Business Manager
207-795-4104

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed cases of Swine Flu in Maine. They are carefully monitoring the situation and providing information to schools. The Maine CDC has recommended that schools and other child care settings review respiratory hygiene guidelines and monitor students and staff for acute respiratory illnesses. All schools have been directed to share the following information with students and parents in order to prevent the transmission of infections such as influenza.

1. Cover your coughs and sneezes.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
3. Wash your hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing.
4. Please stay home if you are sick, especially if you have a fever and are coughing and sneezing.
5. Do not send students to school to be checked by the school nurse. Students present at school with a fever and respiratory symptoms will be sent home.
6. If you are sick, you should stay home for at least 24 to 48 hours after the symptoms (fever of 100 degrees, cough, sore throat, body aches, and/or nausea and vomiting) are gone to make sure you are symptom free.
7. Be sure to drink fluids, practice good nutrition, get plenty of rest, and avoid contact with others who are ill.
8. You should seek medical care if symptoms get worse.

Should a school have a medically confirmed case of Swine Flu, the CDC has directed that the school be closed for a period of seven days. Should that occur, the school will use its School Messenger telephone communication system, the school department Website, and media to keep parents informed.

In addition to the attached informational sheet, parents may access more information at www.cdc.gov/swineflu, www.pandemicflu.gov, www.maine.gov/education/swineflu.html and www.maine.gov/dbhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml where you will find a planning checklist for individuals and families that may be helpful. Our school nurses will continue to monitor the health of our students and staff and provide you with any needed updates regarding the flu outbreak.

Sincerely,

Leon Levesque
Superintendent of Schools

LL/dd



Swine Flu

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Swine Influenza and You

Swine Flu website last updated April 29, 2009, 10:55 PM ET

What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

Are there human infections with swine flu in the U.S.?

In late March and early April 2009, cases of human infection with swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses were first reported in Southern California and near San Antonio, Texas. Other U.S. states have reported cases of swine flu infection in humans and cases have been reported internationally as well. An updated case count of confirmed swine flu infections in the United States is kept at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm> CDC and local and state health agencies are working together to investigate this situation.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

CDC has determined that this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How does swine flu spread?

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.

Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

How can someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others?

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

How long can viruses live outside the body?

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. Frequent handwashing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- 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.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible. Do not go to work or school if ill. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner. We recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in areas where swine influenza cases have been identified and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact their health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion

- Severe or persistent vomiting

How serious is swine flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Between 2005 until January 2009, 12 human cases of swine flu were detected in the U.S. with no deaths occurring. However, swine flu infection can be serious. In September 1988, a previously healthy 32-year-old pregnant woman in Wisconsin was hospitalized for pneumonia after being infected with swine flu and died 8 days later. A swine flu outbreak in Fort Dix, New Jersey occurred in 1976 that caused more than 200 cases with serious illness in several people and one death.

What is CDC doing in response to the outbreak? April 29, 2009, 10:55 PM ET

CDC has implemented its [emergency response](#). The agency's goals are to reduce transmission and illness severity, and provide information to help health care providers, public health officials and the public address the challenges posed by the new virus. CDC continues to issue new [interim guidance](#) for clinicians and public health professionals. In addition, CDC's Division of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) continues to send antiviral drugs, personal protective equipment, and respiratory protection devices to all 50 states and U.S. territories to help them respond to the outbreak.

What epidemiological investigations are taking place in response to the recent outbreak?

April 29, 2009, 10:55 PM ET

CDC works very closely with state and local officials in areas where human cases of H1N1 (swine flu) infections have been identified. In California and Texas, where EpiAid teams have been deployed, many epidemiological activities are taking place or planned including:

- Active surveillance in the counties where infections in humans have been identified;
- Studies of health care workers who were exposed to patients infected with the virus to see if they became infected;
- Studies of households and other contacts of people who were confirmed to have been infected to see if they became infected;
- Study of a public high school where three confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) of swine origin occurred to see if anyone became infected and how much contact they had with a confirmed case; and
- Study to see how long a person with the virus infection sheds the virus.
- Links to non-federal organizations are provided solely as a service to our users. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CDC or the federal government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links.
- Links to non-federal organizations are provided solely as a service to our users. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CDC or the federal government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links.

File Formas Help:



[How do you view different file formats\(PDF, DOC, PPT, MPEG\) on this site?](#)

Page last reviewed April 29, 2009 10:55PM ET

Page last updated April 29, 2009 10:55PM ET

Content source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333, USA
800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348, 24 Hours/Every Day - cdcinfo@cdc.gov

