

## **SWINE FLU (H1N1)**

### **April 30, 2009 11:00 AM**

Dubuque County public health, health care, school representatives, and community preparedness personnel recently met to discuss the local response for swine influenza (swine flu) (H1N1) if it should occur in the community.

Students and families should be reassured that health staff members of Dubuque Community Schools and Western Dubuque Community Schools are maintaining a close working relationship with local, state and federal health officials as investigations continue into growing numbers of swine flu (H1N1) across the country. Health Services Supervisors Patrice Lambert and Sheila Knapp are the liaisons with other health officials and will issue recommendations if and when appropriate. At this time, no cases of swine flu (H1N1) have been identified locally. We have no directives to alter school schedules or calendars at the time of this memo.

Spread of this swine flu is thought to be transmitted in the same way that seasonal flu spreads, from person to person through coughing or sneezing. People may also become infected by touching something with influenza virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Please be aware of the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some people with swine flu have also reported diarrhea and vomiting in addition to the other symptoms.

To help prevent illness:

- Avoid contact with ill persons.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- After you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand gel.
- Practice frequent hand washing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose. Germs are spread that way.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Eat a nutritious diet and drink plenty of liquids.
- Stay home when ill.

Since the spread of swine flu is primarily via droplet transmission, extensive cleaning of school facilities is not recommended at this time. Routine cleaning with standard products is sufficient. However, influenza virus can be transmitted through contact with objects, so encouraging good hand washing with your students to prevent illness is vital.

In the event that infection is confirmed in any of our school populations, the decision for school closure will be determined on a case-by-case basis including input from local and state health officials and district personnel.

At this time, committee recommendations do not support dissemination of information directly to families due to the rapidly changing status of this outbreak. If you are approached with specific questions regarding this issue, please direct them to the websites for each school district. Further questions may be referred to the individual school nurses.

Please be aware of the potential for misinformation on this issue. We strongly suggest regularly visiting credible websites which can be accessed using the links below.

[http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu\\_you.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm)

[http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/swine\\_flu.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/swine_flu.asp)

For more information, the Iowa Department of Public Health has established a 24 hour hotline at 800-447-1985.

Keep in mind that this situation is constantly changing. We will keep you informed as appropriate.