

Friday, May 1, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The swine influenza has been a lead news story in the local, national and global media over the last few days. Swine influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. Before the current outbreak, people rarely got swine flu, and usually only if they were in very close proximity to infected pigs. However, during the current outbreak, the virus is able to spread from person-to-person.

Symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to those of regular or seasonal flu and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Although winter is over, there is still a low level of seasonal influenza occurring in the state.

There is no vaccine available at this time, but the swine flu can be treated with certain antiviral drugs. Persons with swine flu are contagious for up to seven days or longer after the onset of illness, so it is important to take the following steps to prevent spreading the virus to others:

- Stay home when you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others;
- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissues;
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water and getting plenty of rest and exercise; and
- Seek care if you have influenza-like illness.

The Center for Disease Control is asking those individuals who have a recent history of travel and experience mild, flu-like symptoms to stay home. However, if you feel your symptoms worsen or become severe, call or visit your health care provider.

As a District, we are in daily contact with the Southeast Task Force and the Lancaster Emergency Management Agency regarding the current status of the outbreaks. **Our school nurses receive daily updates from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and we will continue to closely monitor this situation.**

Although the current circumstances do not warrant it, I would encourage parents to work on a contingency plan for childcare now in case of a local outbreak requiring schools to close. If this were to happen, parents and guardians would be notified immediately. Please know your child's safety is our primary concern.

For more information on Swine Influenza A/H1N1, contact the Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH or visit [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us).

Sincerely,



Pedro A. Rivera  
Superintendent