

Healthcare professionals have determined that this strain of flu is Swine Influenza A (H1N1) virus and is spreading from human to human largely through coughing or sneezing or touching something with the virus on it and then touching your nose or mouth. Infected individuals may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. The symptoms of swine flu are similar to the regular human flu and may include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu.

The best strategy to reduce the risk of becoming infected with influenza during a pandemic is to avoid crowded settings and other situations that increase the risk of exposure to someone who may be infected. There are two basic approaches: using common sense hygiene and practicing social distancing. As such, the following is expected of all in the workplace:

- You are encouraged to wash your hands frequently with soap and water or with hand sanitizer if there is no soap or water available. Also, avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.

- If applicable, please cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your upper sleeves if tissues are not available. All employees should wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer after they cough, sneeze or blow their noses.

- Employees should avoid close contact with each other as is feasible. Avoid shaking hands and always wash your hands after direct contact with others. Reduce or eliminate unnecessary social interactions.

- Keep work surfaces, telephones, computer equipment and other frequently touched surfaces and office equipment clean. Use only disinfectants registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and follow all directions and safety precautions indicated on the label.

- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment as is feasible. If you share a work space, sanitize before using the area.

- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including good nutrition, exercise, and smoking cessation is always a good place to start. A person's overall health impacts their body's immune system and can affect their ability to fight off, or recover from, an infectious disease.

Additionally, we are implementing the following to assist you while you are at work:

- Hand sanitizer and tissues have been made available. Please see your Principal if you do not have any.

- Facial surgical masks have been ordered and will be offered to students who come to school with symptoms prior to being picked up and to staff members who assist them.

- Administration will monitor public health communications about pandemic flu recommendations regularly.

- If a campus will be closed, such decisions will be communicated to employees using the Emergency Phone Tree. You must give accurate telephone contact information to your Principal. In addition, an emergency notice will be posted on the school's website.

- Most of all, if you experience symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with swine flu, you are encouraged to go to a doctor and stay home from work until released by your doctor and a minimum of 24 hours after you are free of fever.

**The above information has been gleaned from OSHA, CDC and DOL guidance.*