



Harford County Public Schools

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Patricia L. Skebeck, Interim Superintendent of Schools

April 29, 2009

Dear Parents,

By now you have heard reports about Swine Flu cases in Mexico and the U.S., including New York City. Although there have been no confirmed or probable cases of swine influenza in Maryland to date, the Harford County school system is working closely with the Harford County Health Department and state agencies to keep abreast of this rapidly evolving and fluid situation.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), there are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy:

- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.
- Remind your children to wash their hands often. Washing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is ideal. That's about as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
- Remind your children the proper use of hand sanitizer. Gels, rubs and hand-wipes all work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand wipes all must be disposed of properly. Always read and follow label instructions when using hand sanitizer.
- Remind your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes.
- Remind your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve - not your hands.
- Enclosed with this letter is a checklist and fact sheet on tips for coping with swine influenza.

We at HCPS are continuing to implement our plan to keep students safe:

- School nurses are continuing the message of hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette. 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.
- Our custodial staff is working diligently to keep our buildings clean and is using effective disinfection techniques.
- The Harford County Health Department is working closely with our schools to track attendance and influenza like symptoms in our students.
- Nurses will monitor student and staff wellness and will continue to send home those with fevers over 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If you get sick, the CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them

Please stay informed and be prepared. You can find the most up to date information online at www.harfordcountyhealth.com or www.cdc.gov/swineflu. Thank you for your cooperation to keep our children and our schools healthy.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Skebeck
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Tips for Parents on Coping with Swine Influenza

If someone in your home develops flu symptoms (fever >100°F, cough, sore throat, muscle aches):

- Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids.
- Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- Adults with fever, sore throat and muscle aches can take ibuprofen (Motrin), acetaminophen (Tylenol), naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve), or aspirin. (Check with your health care provider if you think there is a medical reason, such as an allergy, to not give these products to the sick person.)
- Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life threatening illness.
- Sponging with tepid (wrist-temperature) water lowers fever temporarily.
- Do not sponge with alcohol.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag for disposal within reach of the patient.
- All members of the household should wash their hands frequently.
- Keep other family members and visitors away from the person who is ill. Preferably have the ill person stay in a room with a separate bathroom if possible.
- Contact a healthcare provider for further advice. If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or getting worse, contact the healthcare provider right away.

Items to have on hand at home:

- Soap and water or alcohol based hand wash
- Medicines for fever, such as aspirin (for adults only)
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) ibuprofen (Motrin) or naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve)
- Thermometer
- Fluids with electrolytes, such as Pedialyte, Gatorade
- Garbage bags
- Tissues