



Rhode Island Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5094

www.health.ri.gov

Interim Health Advisory

Date: May 7, 2009
To: School and Childcare Facilities
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Schools/Childcare Facilities & H1N1 (Swine Flu) Virus in Rhode Island

Current Update

HEALTH is providing the following updated guidance for Rhode Island schools and childcare settings; however, as new information is available, guidance may change. Please check websites on a frequent basis for updated information. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised restraint from closing colleges and universities due to Probable or Confirmed cases of H1N1 virus (Swine Influenza). Instead, the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) recommends the following:

- Students who develop ILI (fever with either cough or sore throat) should stay home from school/ their childcare facility for 7 days after the onset of illness or at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer. Parents of children who experience ILI and wish to seek medical care should contact their health care providers to report illness (by telephone or other remote means) before seeking care at a clinic, physician's office, or hospital. Children who have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath or are believed to be severely ill should seek immediate medical attention.
- If ill children **must** go into the community (e.g., to seek medical care) they should wear a face mask to reduce the risk of spreading the virus in the community when they cough, sneeze, talk or breathe. If a face mask is unavailable, ill children needing to go into the community should use a handkerchief or scarf (or similar cloth that would decrease the spread of droplets with coughing) to cover any coughing.

Disease Reporting and Consultation

Until further notice, school nurses and student health centers should report higher than normal absenteeism to HEALTH at 401-222-2577.

For More Information

U.S. CDC Swine Influenza Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/>

Rhode Island-Specific Information as well as links to CDC:
<http://www.health.ri.gov/pandemicflu/swineflu/swineflu.php>

Infection Control and Treatment Guidance: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/recommendations.htm>

Clean Hands Save Lives!: www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/

All You Have To Do Is Wash Your Hands Podcast: This Podcast teaches children how and when to wash their hands properly. <http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=11072>

Downloadable Flu Prevention Materials for Schools/Day Cares:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/>

Preventing the Spread of Influenza (the Flu) in Child Care Settings: Guidance for Administrators, Care Providers, and Other Staff: Flu recommendations for schools and child care providers <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/childcaresettings.htm>

Protecting Against the Flu: Advice for Caregivers of Children Less Than 6 Months Old: Research has shown that children less than 5 years of age are at high risk of serious flu-related complications. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/infantcare.htm>

Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School: Fact Sheet
http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm

Ounce of Prevention: Tips and streaming video for parents and children about the steps and benefits of effective hand washing <http://www.cdc.gov/ounceofprevention/>

Clean Hands Saves Lives: Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. <http://www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/3>

Hand washing to reduce Disease: Recommendations to Reduce Disease Transmission from Animals in Public Settings <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5605a4.htm>

BAM! Body and Mind. Teacher's Corner: In this activity, students will conduct an experiment on washing their hands. They will learn that "clean" hands may not be so clean after all and the critical importance of washing their hands as a way to prevent the spread of disease.
http://www.bam.gov/teachers/epidemiology_hand_wash.html

CDC TV - Put Your Hands Together: (Video) Scientists estimate that people are not washing their hands often or well enough and may transmit up to 80% of all infections by their hands.
<http://www.cdc.gov/CDCTV/HandsTogether/>

Cover your Cough Posters: Stop the Spread of Germs that Make You and Others Sick! Printable formats of "Cover Your Cough". Posters only available as PDF files.
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>

CDC - Be a Germ Stopper: Posters and Materials: For Community and Public Settings Like Schools and Child Care Facilities). Cover Your Cough also available for health care settings.
<http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm>

"It's a SNAP" Toolkit Program materials to help prevent school absenteeism activities for school administrators, teachers, students and others can do to help stop the spread of germs in schools. See the hand cleaning section of the "It's a SNAP" site at www.itsasnap.org/snap/about.asp.

Scrub Club <http://www.scrubclub.org/> Kids can learn about health and hygiene and become members of the Scrub Club(tm) at www.scrubclub.org. The site features a fun and educational animated Webisode with seven "soaper-heros" who battle nasty villains who represent germs and bacteria. Kids learn the six key steps to proper hand-washing through a webisode, hand-washing song, interactive games, and activities for kids, and educational materials for teachers are also available to download.