

H1N1 Influenza Virus

The EASD would like to inform you of the steps we are taking to monitor the recent occurrences of swine flu in the United States. The district is receiving daily updates concerning swine flu from the PA Department of Health. The nurses are monitoring the buildings for increases in absenteeism and increases in children ill with influenza like illnesses. We are encouraging your children to wash their hands frequently and to cover their mouth and nose when they sneeze or cough.

Swine flu (H1N1) is a type of influenza (flu) virus that causes respiratory disease that can spread between people. Most people infected with this virus in the United States have had a mild disease. Young children, pregnant women and people with chronic diseases like asthma and diabetes may be at higher risk of complications from this disease. The following are steps that you can take to protect your family and to know when to seek medical care.

What are the symptoms? The symptoms of swine flu are similar to the symptoms of regular flu. These include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. There may occasionally be vomiting and diarrhea. You may want to contact your health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is necessary.

How to keep from getting swine flu virus? Flu virus spreads from person to person mainly through the coughing or sneezing of a sick person. Flu virus may also be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with the virus and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

- Teach your child to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (The amount of time it takes your child to sing the Happy Birthday song twice.) Encourage hand washing after sneezing or coughing. Alcohol based gel sanitizers may be used if soap and water is not available. If using a gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry.
- Teach your child to cough or sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of their elbow. Throw away used tissues in the trash can.
- Tell your child to not touch their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Children who are sick should stay home from school. Sick parents should stay home from work.

What to do if your child is sick:

- Keep children home and away from school until they have been without a fever for 24 hours. Seek medical attention if needed
- Have your child drink a lot of liquid (water, juice, Pedialyte)
- Keep your sick child comfortable. Rest is important.

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting

- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

The EASD will continue to monitor the progress of the swine flu infections in the United States. The district will follow recommendations by the PA Department of Health in the event of swine flu occurrences in our schools.

Health Room Memo for Students with Influenza like illness

Your child has been sent home from school today because he / she is exhibiting symptoms of influenza-like illness.

The Ephrata Area School District is working closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and is following the guidelines of the Department of Health when sending children with influenza-like symptoms home from school.

To return to school, students must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, such as Tylenol or Advil. Students who return to school too soon will be sent home.

Note: A student sent home with a fever over 100 degrees will not be able to return to school the next day because she / he has not been fever free for 24 hours.

The Health Care staff of the Ephrata Area School District appreciates your support. We hope that by working together we will help contain the spread of the H1N1 flu.