

INTERIM COLLEGE GUIDANCE

4-30-09

State of CT Department of Public Health

As you may know, there have been several cases of a novel influenza virus, swine flu, identified in the U.S. and other countries. This is an evolving situation and it is important to note that you should continue to follow the issue for developing information. The guidance provided here will give you some basic information about the swine flu and list additional resources so that you can stay current on this evolving issue. For information about swine flu, visit the Department of Public Health's web site at: <http://www.ct.gov/dph>. This site will be updated as more information is available.

We have included a one-page fact sheet, *Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs*, that you may want to copy and distribute to students, staff. It may also be helpful to post this information at sites around the school.

Colleges and Universities should review their current Pandemic Plan and implement any part of the plan that is relevant to this current outbreak.

General Information:

- There is no vaccine available at this time for the current outbreak of the swine flu virus.
- We advise that you maintain general health and hygiene activities in the schools. Remind all students and staff of the importance of regular hand washing and/or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Limit the spread of germs by covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue and by not sharing drinks. For additional information on preventing the spread of germs visit the following CDC sites:
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/>
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm>
- People with recent travel to an area that has reported cases of swine flu who do not have any symptoms do not need to be excluded from the school setting.
- People considering travel to areas outside the US should always check the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention for health recommendations and the state department for any travel warnings or advisories

Ill students/teachers/staff

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and may include fever (greater than 100° F or 37.8°C), sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills, headache and body aches, and fatigue.

We recommend the following:

For students/staff/faculty that lives in non campus sponsored housing:

- If a student with febrile respiratory illness has traveled recently to an affected area (currently Mexico, Southern California, Texas, Ohio, Kansas, and New

York City), or is a contact to a person with a febrile respiratory illness who traveled to an affected area, that person should be advised to contact their regular health care provider. They should be advised to contact their health care provider (by telephone or other remote means) BEFORE seeking care at any health care provider or facility

- A student with a febrile respiratory illness who has not traveled to the affected areas should be asked to stay in their home until symptoms are gone.
- Students with severe respiratory symptoms should be advised to contact their regular health care provider. They should be advised to contact their health care provider (by telephone or other remote means) BEFORE seeking care at any health care provider or facility
- A person may be infectious for up to 10 days after illness onset with influenza, adults are generally infectious for 5-7 days. The current recommendation is that persons with a febrile respiratory illness should be asked to stay home for 7 days and/or 24 hours after symptoms are gone, which ever is longer.

The above recommendations should apply to all ill staff and faculty.

For students that live in campus sponsored housing:

- If a student with febrile respiratory illness has traveled recently to an affected area (currently Mexico, Southern California, Texas, Ohio, Kansas, and New York City), they should be advised to contact their regular health care provider. They should be given instructions that they not return to campus until their health care provider provides them with clearance to return. General guidelines would be the 7 after illness onset and/or 24 hours after symptoms are gone, which ever is longer
- Colleges and Universities should begin to explore potential locations for isolation of students who are symptomatic and traveled to an affected area. Consideration should be given to minimize additional exposures to the ill student and take into account meals for that student. Contact your local or state health department for additional guidance, since the issues are evolving.
- If a student with febrile respiratory illness has not traveled to an affected area, they should be asked to stay in their university sponsored housing unit for 7days and/or 24 hours after symptoms are gone, which ever is longer. If it is not possible to stay isolated in the housing unit, it may be advisable to send the person to their home or an alternate housing arrangement where they can stay isolated.
- Persons in home isolation and their household members should be given infection control instructions: including frequent hand washing with soap and water. Use

alcohol-based hand gels (containing at least 60% alcohol) when soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty. When the ill person is within 6 feet of others at home, the ill person should wear a face mask, if one is available and the ill person is able to tolerate wearing it.

- Household contacts of ill persons who are well should:
 1. Remain home at the earliest sign of illness;
 2. Minimize contact in the community to the extent possible;
 3. Designate a single household family member as the ill person's caregiver to minimize interactions with asymptomatic persons.

Additional resources

1. The CT Department of Public Health has several websites

- www.ct.gov/dph/swineflu
- Don't share germs English version.pdf

http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/communications/cerc/dontshare_english.pdf

- Don't share germs Spanish version pdf

<http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/communications/cerc/dontsharespanish.pdf>

3. College health

http://www.acha.org/info_resources/pandemic_flu.cfm

2. Several Centers for Disease Control and Prevention websites

- www.cdc.gov/flu/swine
- www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/
- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm>

Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs

Fact Sheet

1. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

2. Stay home when you are sick.

Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. Keep sick children at home. You will help prevent others from catching the illness.

3. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

4. Wash your hands often.

Washing your hands and the hands of your children often will help protect you from germs.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.