



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局  
Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref.: EDB(SD\_CT)ADM/20/05/1(1)

電話 Telephone:

27 April 2009

To: Supervisors/Principals of all Kindergartens,  
Kindergarten cum Child Care Centres, Secondary, Primary and Special Schools

Dear Supervisor/Principal,

**Be vigilant against Swine Influenza**

In view of outbreaks of human infection of Swine Influenza H1N1 in Mexico and the United States, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that surveillance systems have been stepped up and the Response Level under the Government's Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic has been escalated from "Alert" to "Serious" level. As the presenting symptoms of Human Swine Influenza are similar to seasonal influenza, the preventive measures and guidelines for seasonal influenza are also applicable. A letter issued by CHP today is attached at Appendix 1. Schools are urged to take necessary action according to the advice stipulated in the letter.

If an increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among staff or students is noticed, schools have to follow the existing reporting mechanism to report the case(s) to the Central Notification Office of DH (Fax: 2477-2770; Tel: 2477-2772) by completing the "Suspected Infectious Disease Outbreak in School / Kindergarten Notification Form" for epidemiological investigation and outbreak control, and forward a copy of the Notification Form to their respective Regional Education Offices / Pre-primary Services Office for record purpose.

On preventing Human Swine Influenza and other communicable diseases, we need full cooperation from the parents. Schools are requested to send a letter to parents to urge them to pay attention to the personal hygiene of their children as well as the environmental hygiene. Parents should take appropriate preventive measures against communicable diseases as a concerted effort with the schools. A sample letter to parents is enclosed at Appendix 2 for reference.

For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officers/Pre-primary Services Officer.

Yours sincerely,

(YF LEE)

for Secretary for Education

監測及流行病學處



衛生防護中心  
Centre for Health Protection

保障市民健康  
Protecting Hong Kong's health

Surveillance  
And  
Epidemiology  
Branch

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (15) in DH SEB CD/8/89/1  
來函檔號 Your Ref. :  
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傳真 Fax No. :

27 April 2009

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

### Be vigilant against Swine Influenza

In view of the recent outbreak of human swine influenza A (H1N1) in the North America, the Serious Response Level under the Government's Preparedness Plan for Pandemic was activated on 26 April 2009. I would like to take this opportunity to remind kindergartens and schools to take precautions against swine influenza.

The symptoms and mode of transmission of swine influenza in people are expected to be similar to regular human seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. I attach a fact sheet on swine influenza for your reference.

Kindergartens and schools are collective assembly places and young children are incapable of taking proper personal care. To prevent possible outbreak of influenza, children with fever and respiratory symptoms are strongly advised not to attend school till 48 hours after fever has subsided. Besides, parents should record the body temperature of their children and hand in the temperature record sheet to the school everyday.

Any students of staff who returned from affected place should wear a surgical mask for seven days as a precautionary measure. If they developed influenza-like symptoms such as fever, sore throat and cough, they should consult doctor for medical advice promptly. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) may consider advising closure of an individual school if any student/staff of a school is confirmed to be suffering from swine influenza.



衛生防護中心乃衛生署  
轄下執行疾病預防  
及控制的專業架構  
The Centre for Health  
Protection is a  
professional arm of the  
Department of Health for  
disease prevention and  
control

In addition, the following general precautionary measures are also advised:

- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly. Alcohol-based hand rub is also effective when hands are not visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Wash hands with liquid soap promptly if they are contaminated by respiratory tract secretions, e.g. after sneezing or coughing.
- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- No spitting. Always wrap nasal and mouth discharges with tissue paper, and dispose of the tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin.
- Wear mask when symptoms of respiratory tract infection or fever develop. Seek medical advice promptly.
- Refrain from work or school if you develop symptoms of influenza

If you notice an increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among your staff or clients, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

For the latest information on human swine influenza, please see our Daily Influenza Situation Update at the CHP website ([www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk)).

Yours sincerely,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

Consultant Community Medicine (Communicable Disease)  
Surveillance and Epidemiology Branch  
Centre for Health Protection

## **Health Topic: Human Infection with Swine Influenza**

Swine influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza among pigs. There are four main influenza type A virus subtypes that have been isolated in pigs: H1N1, H1N2, H3N2, and H3N1. However, most of the recently isolated influenza viruses from pigs have been H1N1 viruses. The classical swine flu virus (an influenza type A H1N1 virus) was first isolated from a pig in 1930 and it is known to circulate among pig populations since then. The H1N1 swine flu viruses are antigenically different from human H1N1 viruses and swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with swine flu do occasionally occur. Most commonly, human cases of swine influenza happen in people with direct exposure to pigs (e.g. workers in the swine industry). Human-to-human transmission of swine flu can also occur.

### **Clinical features**

The symptoms of swine flu in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

### **Mode of transmission**

Influenza viruses can be directly transmitted from pigs to people and from people to pigs. Human infection with flu viruses from pigs are most likely to occur when people are in close proximity to infected pigs, such as in pig barns and livestock exhibits housing pigs at fairs. Human-to-human transmission of swine flu can also occur. This is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu occurs in people, which is mainly person-to-person transmission through coughing or sneezing of people infected with the influenza virus. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F (71.1°C) kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

### **Prevention**

Since H1N1 swine flu viruses are antigenically very different from human H1N1 viruses, vaccines for human seasonal flu would not provide protection from H1N1 swine flu viruses. We are recommending precautionary measures for members of public:

- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly. Alcohol-based handrub is also effective when hands are not visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way
- Wash hands with liquid soap promptly if they are contaminated by respiratory tract secretions, e.g. after sneezing or coughing.
- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- No spitting. Always wrap nasal and mouth discharges with tissue paper, and dispose of the tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin.
- Wear mask when symptoms of respiratory tract infection or fever develop. Seek medical advice promptly.
- Refrain from work or school if develop symptoms of influenza

## [Sample Letter to Parents]

(This sample letter is for reference only. Individual schools should edit the sample letter in the light of their own situation.)

xx April 2009

Dear Parents,

1. In view of outbreaks of human infection of Swine Influenza H1N1 in Mexico and the United States, the Serious Response Level under the Government's Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic was activated on 26 April 2009. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) alerted the public that Human Swine Influenza may have the chance to be spread in Hong Kong.
2. To get prepared for the prevention of such communicable disease, we have cleansed and disinfected our school premises to keep the school premises clean, and will urge staff and students to pay attention to personal and environmental hygiene.
3. It is incumbent upon all of us to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. To safeguard students' health, parents are urged to maintain a hygienic household, and co-operate with us by reminding students to observe personal hygiene and keep schools hygienic. In this connection, you are kindly requested to take the following measures:
  - Do not send children to school if they have fever. (For the normal body temperature range, please refer to CHP's guidelines pertaining to the means for measuring body temperature.)
  - Inform school immediately if children are sick or have been admitted to hospital for surveillance.
  - Keep sick children at home until symptoms have improved and fever has subsided. Then, take rest for at least 2 more days before returning to school.
  - Co-operate with schools by picking up children not feeling well from school and consulting the doctor immediately.
  - Provide children with handkerchiefs or tissue papers and remind them not to share towels or tissue papers with others.
  - Before sending children to school, measure their body temperature, record the reading and sign the temperature record sheet, which should be handed to the school every day.
4. We have also urged the drivers of school buses/nanny vans and escorts not to drive/board these vehicles and make suitable arrangements if they run a fever or have any influenza symptoms. School and parents will be immediately informed.
5. In case of any students being absent due to sickness, we would provide learning support for them as far as possible so that their learning progress would not be affected.
6. We would like to appeal to parents for collaboration in order to maintain a clean and healthy living environment. Please also remind your children to pay attention to personal hygiene and to take preventive measures for communicable diseases.

Principal of (school name)

Signature of Principal