

May 1, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Due to the nation's recent warnings regarding Swine Flu, the district asks all parents to remain attentive to student health, well being and safety.

While only a few confirmed cases of swine flu have been reported in New Jersey, it is imperative that all families take steps to prevent the spread of this viral infection. Below are tips for staying healthy from the Centers for Disease Control:

What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

- When you sneeze or cough, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue, your elbow, or armpit. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

- Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

If you or your family traveled to Mexico where the outbreak originated or have been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with Swine Flu within the past two weeks, you may want to notify your physician. Exposed students who develop symptoms during five days following exposure should avoid contact with others, seek immediate medical evaluation and practice precautions recommended for Swine Flu patients. They may also be excluded from school, pending proper diagnosis.

To provide you with more facts about Swine Flu, a link to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site has been posted on the district homepage. Visit www.eastamwell.org and click on *School District Guidelines for Swine Influenza*. Please see the reverse side of this letter for a message from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

While we do not anticipate concerns about Swine Flu in the East Amwell School District, informing and alerting parents to this issue helps ensure students' health and safety.

Sincerely,

Edward F. Stoloski
Superintendent

DHSS Asks School, Child Care Centers to be on Watch For Increased Influenza Activity

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has sent a health alert to New Jersey schools and child care settings asking them to be on increased watch for influenza-like cases in the upcoming weeks.

The health advisory is one of the state's increased monitoring actions in response to the recent cases of swine flu that have been identified in the United States and Mexico. As of today, there are no cases in New Jersey.

"As a readiness measure, we have reached out to schools and all child care facilities to ask them to be on the lookout for children exhibiting signs of influenza," said Health and Senior Services Commissioner Heather Howard. "We are asking these facilities to send children home if they are showing signs of respiratory illness and fever. We are also reminding them to report suspected cases of swine influenza or outbreaks of any influenza-like illness to their local health department."

"We are working closely with the Department of Health and Senior Services to ensure that all school districts remain up to date and well informed. School district officials should maintain close contact with their local health departments and pass on preventive information to families," said Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy.

The Department is recommending that sick children remain at home until 24-48 hours after the symptoms end.

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to seasonal flu and include fever, lack of appetite, coughing and fatigue. Some people have also reported having a sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

You cannot get swine flu from eating pork or pork product. There are no special recommendations for anyone who owns a pig or is routinely exposed to pigs.

Commissioner Howard also reminds the public that there are precautions that everyone should take to reduce the chance of getting ill:

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- See your physician if your illness continues.

"The Department is continuing to monitor the situations around the country and Mexico and is working very closely with our federal, regional and local health partners," said Commissioner Howard. "We have plans in place in the event of a more widespread outbreak. The most important thing New Jersey residents can do now is to stay informed and continue to follow those preventive measures."

For more information about swine flu, visit www.cdc.gov/swineflu or www.nj.gov/health.