

South Central Schools

May 4, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you already know, there have been confirmed human cases of Swine influenza A (H1N1) identified in the U.S. As a school district, we wanted to share important information which can help prevent the spread of Swine influenza in our community. Education and knowledge are vital to keep everyone healthy.

This new virus is a hybrid, with genetic elements of swine influenza, avian influenza, and human influenza. The Department of Health and Human Services issued a nationwide public health emergency, in response to the human infections.

There is no vaccine available at this time to protect humans against swine flu; however, the virus is susceptible to the prescription antiviral drugs. Because this is a new strain, seasonal flu shots do not protect people, so good hygiene is important to help prevent the spread of germs. *Swine influenza is spread by coughing, sneezing and unclean hands.* The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommends the following steps to aid in the prevention of swine flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Put used tissues in the trash.
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. This is how viruses can enter the body.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school, and limit your contact with others to keep from infecting them. Adults should not leave home until 7 days after symptoms begin; children should stay home 10 days after the onset of illness. (Recommendations following diagnosis of swine influenza.)

Symptoms of swine influenza are fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, and cough, but may also include runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. If you suspect a member of your family has swine influenza A, call your family physician.

You cannot contract swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Swine flu is a respiratory illness and is not transmitted by food. This is why covering your cough, good hand washing, and staying home when you're ill are so important.

We hope this information is useful in keeping you and your family healthy. Many members of this community attend, work, or enter the school campuses on a daily basis. We can do our part in preventing the spread of illness by becoming educated and following the recommended guidelines of the Center for Disease Control. For more information, www.cdc.gov or www.wjbradio.com.