



Grant County Health District – Always Working for a Healthier and Safer Grant County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 04/29/2009	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
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SWINE FLU ADVISORY #3 – SCHOOL NURSES

There are currently no cases of swine flu in Washington State. We are encouraging schools to continue with normal infection control measures and policies.

As the disease outbreak continues, case numbers and available information about the disease will be updated; recommendations may change. The Grant County Health District will provide periodic updates via public media and our website www.granthealth.org. CDC will be updating its website on a daily basis. www.cdc.gov/swineflu.

Important information for your consideration:

1. It is important to screen **all** children and staff for influenza like symptoms. While travel to other countries and outside of Washington State is important information it is not the sole reason to ask a student or staff member to seek medical attention.
2. One confirmed case of swine flu involving a student or staff member could be reason to close all schools for the remainder of the school year (a determination to be made by the Grant County Health Officer).
3. Please post Cover Your Cough posters at all school entrances.
English: http://www.doh.wa.gov/Topics/cyc/cyc_smpost.pdf
Spanish: http://www.doh.wa.gov/Topics/cyc/cyc_sm_sp.pdf
4. Just a reminder, you are required to report staff and student absenteeism rates greater than 10% to the Grant County Health District 509-766-7960 x13.

Recommendations:

- Each school should use existing student sickness surveillance procedures or establish procedures for identifying and reporting students with influenza like illness.
- Develop emergency contact procedures to notify the ill student's parent or guardians and arrange to have the student sent home as soon as possible.
- Establish procedures to minimize the spread of disease and to protect students and teachers from getting ill.
 - Discourage students from sharing food or utensils.
 - Encourage all students and staff to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating and before touching their eyes, noses or mouths.
 - Advise ill students and staff to cough and sneeze into tissue or sleeves and not use their hands.
 - Advise all students and staff to stay home if they are sick.
 - **Consider stockpiling alcohol based hand sanitizers, hand-washing soap, tissue and disposable facemasks. Grant County Health District recommends you inventory these supplies and order now.**

- N95 masks should be used by all staff providing patient care to individuals with flu-like symptoms.
- Surgical masks should be used on all patients with flu-like symptoms or those sharing areas with patients who have flu-like symptoms if N95 is not available.
- A distance of 6 feet is recommended to separate patients with and without influenza-like illness.

For consistency with various national and international estimates, this document defines close contact as a distance of up to 6 feet. (Referenced: Interim Recommendations for Facemask and Respirator Use in Certain Community Settings Where Swine Influenza A (H1N1) Virus Transmission Has Been Detected).

Messages to Share with Families:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. 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 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.**

Visit the following web sites for more information and to download Cover Your Cough posters and brochures www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has launched a swine flu page located at: www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/swineflu.aspx .

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Pandemic Influenza Plan www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/Planning/PanFluManual/PlanningMitigation.pdf

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