



Parent Information on Swine Influenza

May 1, 2009

In recent days, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed cases of illness due to swine flu in the United States. Although there have not been any reported cases in Pennsylvania at this time, Mastery Charter Schools is working diligently to keep your child's school environment as safe and clean as possible. Below is a fact sheet which will address many of your questions regarding swine flu, what prevention steps Mastery is taking, and what you and your child can do to reduce the risk of swine flu spreading through our schools. If you have any other questions about swine flu, please contact your health care provider or your child's school nurse.

What is swine flu?

Swine flu is a respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses that regularly cause outbreaks in pigs. There have been reports of serious illness and deaths due to swine flu in Mexico and parts of the United States.

What are the symptoms of swine flu?

Swine flu symptoms are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, lethargy, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu.

Is swine flu treatable?

Yes. Antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms). It is particularly important for people who have severe illness and for those with chronic conditions (such as diabetes, heart, or lung disease) to be treated. Most of the persons with swine flu in the U.S. have recovered without treatment.

How does swine flu spread?

Spread of this swine flu virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through the coughing or sneezing of people with the flu. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What is Mastery doing to combat the spread of swine flu?

Every day, our cleaning staff wipes down all common surfaces with sanitizers and germicides. Common surfaces include door knobs, stair railings, bathroom urinals, toilet and faucets. These sanitizers are always kept out of reach of students when they are not being immediately used.

Teachers experiencing flu-like symptoms have been instructed to immediately notify their supervisor and school nurse and will be sent home.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like the flu. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze or spit. 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 hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

What should happen if a child becomes sick outside of school?

If your child is sick, please consider the health of others who may be vulnerable and stay home. Students and adults with symptoms of flu should be evaluated by a health care provider and should not return to school until at least 7 days after the start of symptoms and until they are symptom-free.

What should happen if a child becomes sick in school?

If a student becomes sick at school, students should immediately notify their teacher and school nurse. If the school nurse believes that the student may have flu, the student will be separated from other students and you will be contacted.

If you have questions about your child's health in school, or if you need help obtaining health insurance or a health care provider for your child, please contact your school nurse.