

Swine Influenza Guidance

To: Vermont School Nurses

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- Please Distribute Widely -

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in collaboration with public health officials in several states, is investigating cases of febrile respiratory illness caused by swine influenza (H1N1) viruses. Cases of swine influenza infection have been confirmed in several states as well as in Mexico. It is expected that new cases will continue to be identified in the United States. At this time, there are no cases of swine influenza in Vermont.

The viruses contain a unique combination of gene segments that have not been reported previously among swine or human influenza viruses in the U.S. or elsewhere.

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu in humans and may include:

- Fever (greater than 100° F or 37.8°C)
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Stuffy nose
- Chills
- Headache and body aches
- Fatigue

What school nurses should do:

- When assessing febrile respiratory illness, identify whether the individual has traveled to any of the affected areas (see <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm> for affected areas), or has been in close contact with persons who had febrile respiratory illness and were in an affected area, during the 7 days preceding their illness onset. (Close contact is defined as within 6 feet of an ill person who is a confirmed or suspected case of swine influenza A (H1N1)).

Individuals who meet these criteria should be referred for influenza testing. Rapid tests should not be performed in the school setting if swine influenza is suspected. Contact the Vermont Department of Health at (802) 863-7240 or (800) 640-4374 for further information.

- Identify school-affiliated groups that have returned from travel to the affected areas in the past seven days, and assess travelers for febrile respiratory illness. If such illness is identified, contact the Vermont Department of Health.

- Contact the Vermont Department of Health if your school is experiencing unusually high absenteeism due to influenza-like illness.
- Do *not* give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

Persons with febrile respiratory illness should stay home from work or school to avoid spreading infections (including influenza and other respiratory illnesses) to others in their communities. In addition, respiratory etiquette and frequent hand washing can lessen the spread of respiratory illness.

For more information about swine flu, visit the Vermont Department of Health website <http://healthvermont.gov> or <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>.