

**Wyckoff Township Public Schools**  
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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you already know, Human Swine Virus has shown up in the United States with a few cases now being confirmed in New York. This particular virus appears to have originated in Mexico. The virus can spread quickly but there are ways to minimize the outbreak. The following is based upon information provided by the Center for Disease Control and the Wyckoff Board of Health. Additional information can be obtained from <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>.

**There are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy.**

- Keep children who are sick at home. Do not send them to school. People who are sick should stay home from work or school and stay away from other people until they feel better.
- Reinforce to children to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Teach children to cover their coughs into the inside of their elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Remind children to wash their hands with a lot of soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hands sanitizers are also effective. Students are encouraged to bring hand sanitizers to school. The Wyckoff Board of Health has informed us that generic brands work as good as any others. Bottled sanitizers or wipes can be used.**
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way. Do not share lip balm, make-up, water bottles or any other sports gear.

**Try to avoid close contact with sick people.**

- This virus is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through the coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- If an outbreak occurs in our immediate area, try to avoid places where large groups of people gather.
- If you suspect a family member to have the human swine virus, call your physician before going to the doctor's office. The doctor may want to provide methods of seeing you without exposing other patients. The same advice should be considered prior to seeking medical attention in any emergency offices.

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**What is Swine Influenza?**

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza in pigs. Swine flu viruses cause high levels of illness and low death rates in pigs. Swine influenza viruses may circulate among swine throughout the year, but most outbreaks occur during the late fall and winter months similar to outbreaks in humans. The classic swine flu virus (an influenza type A H1N1 virus) was first isolated from a pig in 1930.

**How many swine flu viruses are there?**

Like all influenza viruses, swine flu viruses change constantly. Pigs can be infected by avian influenza and human influenza viruses as well as swine influenza viruses. When influenza viruses from different species infect pigs, the viruses can reassort (i.e. swap genes) and new viruses that are a mix of swine, human and/or avian influenza viruses can emerge. Over the years, different variations of swine flu viruses have emerged. At this time, there are four main influenza type A virus subtypes that have been isolated in pigs: H1N1, H1N2, H3N2, and H3N1. However, most of the recently isolated influenza viruses from pigs have been H1N1 viruses.

**Can humans catch swine flu?**

Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with swine flu viruses have occurred. Most commonly, these cases occur in persons with direct exposure to pigs (e.g. children near pigs at a fair or workers in the swine industry). In addition, there have been documented cases of one person spreading swine flu to others. For example, an outbreak of apparent swine flu infection in pigs in Wisconsin in 1988 resulted in multiple human infections, and, although no community outbreak resulted, there was antibody evidence of virus transmission from the patient to health care workers who had close contact with the patient.

### **How common is swine flu infection in humans?**

In the past, CDC received reports of approximately one human swine influenza virus infection every one to two years in the U.S., but from December 2005 through February 2009, 12 cases of human infection with swine influenza have been reported.

### **What are the symptoms of swine flu in humans?**

The symptoms of swine flu in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

### **Can people catch swine flu from eating pork?**

No. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products are safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

### **How does swine flu spread?**

Human-to-human transmission of human swine virus can occur. This is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu occurs in people, which is mainly person-to-person transmission through coughing or sneezing of people infected with the influenza virus. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

### **How can human infections with swine influenza be diagnosed?**

To diagnose swine influenza A infection, a respiratory specimen would generally need to be collected within the first 4 to 5 days of illness (when an infected person is most likely to be shedding virus). However, some persons, especially children, may shed virus for 10 days or longer. Identification as a swine flu influenza A virus requires sending the specimen to CDC for laboratory testing.

### **What medications are available to treat swine flu infections in humans?**

There are four different antiviral drugs that are licensed for use in the US for the treatment of influenza: amantadine, rimantadine, oseltamivir and zanamivir. While most swine influenza viruses have been susceptible to all four drugs, the most recent swine influenza viruses isolated from humans are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. At this time, CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

### **Is the H1N1 swine flu virus the same as human H1N1 viruses?**

No. The H1N1 swine flu viruses are antigenically very different from human H1N1 viruses and, therefore, vaccines for human seasonal flu would not provide protection from H1N1 swine flu viruses. This means that the flu shot you may have received during the autumn of 2008 will not be effective against this strain of human swine virus.

### **Will schools be closed if there is an outbreak of swine flu?**

The health and safety of our children is always our first priority. The district would work closely with government officials to confirm an outbreak and if necessary close schools to create "social distancing". Social distancing is a method used to control outbreaks where students would be asked to remain at home or with caretakers and not gather in groups, go shopping or participate in other group activities. Schools would scrub down areas using approved methods within our buildings as we always do. Communication of any closings would be accomplished through our reverse 911 system, posting on our website and other methods such as E-Blast.

### **Would days have to be made up if schools are closed for an outbreak?**

Yes. All days would have to be made up no later than June 30, 2009. They could be added to the end of the school year, schools could be opened on holidays such as Memorial Day or days could be made up on Saturdays.

Again, persons with respiratory illness (not allergy/hay fever related) should stay home from work or school to avoid spreading infections (including influenza and other respiratory illnesses) to others in their communities. In addition, frequent hand washing can lessen the spread of respiratory illness.

I hope this gives you more information on swine flu and how our community can minimize or avoid an outbreak. For more information about swine flu: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>

Sincerely,

Janet Razze, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools