

**How to avoid influenza and other communicable illnesses**

Influenza is primarily spread through respiratory droplets which directly contact the nose, mouth or eyes. 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.

Germs are spread by directly picking them up from the infected person, or by touching an object or surface they recently touched, and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose.

An important way of keeping healthy is with proper hand washing. It is essential to vigorously wash your hands with soap and water many times throughout the day. Friction and soap are key to proper hand washing. Use of a hand sanitizer (The CDC recommends choosing products that contain at least 60% alcohol) is effective too. You should vigorously wash your hands with soap for 15 - 20 seconds.

- Wet your hands with warm, running water and apply liquid soap or use clean bar soap. Lather well.
- Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 15 to 20 seconds.
- Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Rinse well.
- Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel.
- Use a towel to turn off the faucet.

**Crucial times to wash your hands:**

- After using the toilet
- Before eating
- After touching animals or animal waste
- Before and after preparing food, especially before and immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish
- After being in congested public places
- Before hanging dishes to be used by others
- After blowing your nose

- After coughing or sneezing into your hands. You should NOT cough or sneeze directly into your hands. Use a tissue, but still remember the likelihood of your hands being contaminated.
- Before and after treating wounds or cuts
- Before and after touching a sick or injured person
- After handling garbage
- After changing a diaper
- Before inserting or removing contact lenses
- When obviously contaminated or dirty

**Other suggestions:**

- When you are sick, stay home so as not to spread your illness to others
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve to avoid contaminating your hands
- Do not share items which have come in contact with someone else's mouth (cups, utensils, food etc.)
- Avoid touching objects which are frequently touched by others, if this isn't possible, wash your hands immediately afterward.
- Keep your hands away from your mouth, eyes and nose
- Carry your own pen to use instead of using those made available to the general public
- Maintain appropriate social distance during conversations
- Regularly clean highly touched areas (phones, keyboards, copy machines, door handles, elevator buttons etc.)
- Use your knuckle to push buttons on elevators, ATM's, vending machines, etc.
- Promote your health with proper diet, hydration and sleep
- Keep at least 3 feet of distance between you and an individual showing signs of infection (coughing, sneezing or frequent nose blowing)
- Don't put pens, pencils and other objects in your mouth

The above information is important to follow on a daily basis, and not just when an outbreak of a illness is reported. Prevention is important.