

From the Nurse:

Swine Flu

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.

How does swine flu spread?

Influenza viruses can be directly transmitted from pigs to people and from people to pigs. Human infection with flu viruses from pigs are most likely to occur when people are in close proximity to infected pigs, such as in pig barns and livestock exhibits housing pigs at fairs. Human-to-human transmission of swine flu can also 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 by people infected with the influenza virus. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.

What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

There are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Coughing into your elbow reduces the spread of germs.
- 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 thought to 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.

At this time, there are no confirmed cases of swine influenza in Rhode Island.

Barrington Public Schools are being proactive by maintaining general health and hygiene activities in the schools. We are reminding all students and staff of the importance of regular hand-washing/alcohol hand gels, no sharing of bottles, and coughing/sneezing in the elbow. For more information, visit www.barringtonschools.org district homepage and click on the link to the Rhode Island Department of Health website.