



P.O. Box 9310, Stamford, CT 06904  
Offices at 888 Washington Blvd. Phone (203) 977-4105  
www.stamfordpublicschools.org

Joshua P. Starr, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

## **Swine Flu (H1N1 Influenza Infection) Question & Answers**

*Prepared in collaboration with the City of Stamford Department of Health and Social Services*

### **1. What is swine flu?**

*Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that leads to regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses are not transmitted by food. You cannot get swine flu from eating pork or pork products.*

### **2. What are the symptoms of swine flu?**

*The symptoms of swine flu include fever, chills, headache, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, runny nose, and fatigue. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea have also been reported.*

### **3. How is swine flu treated? Is that treatment readily available?**

*The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends antiviral drugs for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with the virus that causes swine flu. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).*

### **4. How long is someone contagious with swine flu?**

*People with swine flu should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possibly for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.*

### **5. What can I do to protect against swine flu?**

*To help prevent the transmission of swine flu, good health and hygiene practices are essential. These include washing your hands with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If water is not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze and carefully dispose of the tissue in a wastebasket, then wash your hands. Cough into your sleeve. Do not share drinking cups or food.*

### **6. What should I do if someone in my family gets sick?**

*If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, you should contact their health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.*

*(continued)*

**7. What preparations has the Stamford community made to prepare for the possibility of a swine flu outbreak?**

*The Stamford Department of Health and Social Services is working closely with the State Department of Public Health, Stamford Hospital, the Stamford Public School System, and other community stakeholders to prepare for a potential swine flu outbreak in Stamford. A Pandemic Flu Preparedness Plan is in place. Information regarding prevention and treatment are being made available to the public. Resources are listed below.*

**8. What if there is a case of swine flu in the community?**

*If cases of swine flu occur in Stamford, the Stamford Health Department will work with the State Department of Public Health, Stamford Hospital, and other community partners to prevent the spread of the swine flu virus.*

**9. Under what circumstance would school closures be considered?**

*According to CDC guidelines, The Director of Health for the City of Stamford would consider dismissal of students in schools that have a confirmed case of swine flu or a suspected case that is directly linked to a confirmed case.*

**10. How would I be notified of a school closure?**

*Depending upon when the notification takes place, Stamford Public Schools employees would be notified directly by their administrator or supervisor, or via their City of Stamford email address. Stamford Public Schools families would be notified using as many methods as possible, including a ParentLink automated phone call, a letter, information posted to the school district website, [www.stamfordpublicschools.org](http://www.stamfordpublicschools.org), PTO email, and the media.*

**11. How long would schools need to be closed?**

*The Director of Health for the City of Stamford would consider reopening closed schools if no additional or suspected cases are identified among students (or school-based personnel) for a period of 7 days.*

**12. If a school is closed, should students and staff be tested for swine flu?**

*According to the CDC guidelines, only individuals with signs and symptoms of influenza should be tested for swine flu.*

**13. Can students and staff from a closed school go out in public?**

*According to the CDC guidelines, individuals with signs and symptoms of influenza should stay home from work or school, and avoid contact with other people. If you have no symptoms, but swine flu has been diagnosed in your community, you should avoid crowded places. If you are not sick, you can go out in public.*

**14. What happens if a school is closed because a student has been diagnosed with swine flu and that student has a sibling in another school?**

*According to the CDC guidelines, household contacts of individuals diagnosed with swine flu should stay home at the first sign of illness. They would be allowed to go to school as long as they remain well.*

**15. What are some online resources for swine flu?**

[www.cityofstamford.org](http://www.cityofstamford.org)

<http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/swineflu>

[www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu)

<http://www.who.int/csr/outbreaknetwork/en/>