How the City is Responding to the H1N1 (swine flu) Virus

The Department of Human Resources is monitoring the location and extent of flu outbreaks. Every necessary precaution will be taken to protect City employees and those they come into contact with. We will communicate directly with employees if important new information becomes available, or if specific action is required.

What Employees Should Know About the Virus

As of May 5, 2009, the Indiana State Department of Health has confirmed three cases of the H1N1 virus (swine flu), two of them in Central Indiana. Although health officials say they see encouraging signs that the new flu may be less severe than some had feared, the virus is still spreading.

Human-to-human transmission of the flu occurs through coughing or sneezing of people infected with the virus. People may also become infected by touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

There is no vaccine available at this time for the current outbreak of the H1N1 virus, so it is important for people living in the affected areas to take steps to prevent spreading the virus to others. If people are ill, they should stay at home and limit contact with others, except to seek medical care. Healthy residents living in these areas should take the everyday preventive actions listed below.

People who live in these areas who develop an illness with fever and respiratory symptoms, such as cough and runny nose, and possibly other symptoms, such as body aches, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, should contact their health care provider. Their health care provider will determine whether influenza testing is needed.

Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits for Employees

1. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

2. Stay home when you are sick.

Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. If you came to work sick, you may be sent home. Keep sick children at home. You will help prevent others from catching the illness.

3. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow.

4. Wash your hands often.

Washing your hands and the hands of your children often will help protect you from germs. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

For Managers

1. Take preventive measures.

Make tissues and hand sanitizers available to your employees. Encourage them to follow the preventive measures listed above—and be sure to follow them yourself.

2. Watch for flu symptoms.

If you observe flu symptoms in an employee, or if an employee calls in sick with the flu, contact Human Resources immediately. HR, in conjunction with management staff, will determine what action to take.

3. Respect confidentiality.

If you believe an employee has the flu, do not take it upon yourself to spread the information. Human Resources will notify those who need to know, including those who may have been exposed.

For More Information

1. Websites.

These web sites are managed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and are updated frequently. You will find a wealth of information on these sites.

www.cdc.gov/swineflu/

www.pandemicflu.gov

2. Telephone hotline.

The Indiana State Department of Health has set up a toll-free hotline for questions about the H1N1 virus. The number is 877-826-0011. Hours are 8:00 AM to 4:45 PM Monday through Friday, and will be extended through weekends as necessary. Officials stress that the hotline is not intended for people to ask medical advice on symptoms. People with flu-like symptoms should call their health care provider.