

East Haddam School District Health Protocol Guide for Students, Parents, and All Staff Members

Dear East Haddam School Community Members,

The following East Haddam School District **Health Protocol Guide** is being provided to you so that we can continue to work together to keep all of us as safe and as healthy as possible. Most of the recommendations contained in this guide are good practices for all of us to follow on a regular basis. However, *they are extremely important for all of us to follow*, given the recent outbreak of Swine Flu both nationally and state-wide.

The recommended practices contained in this guide have been provided to us by health professionals from the Chatham Health District, the State Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Links to each of these sites can be found at the end of this guide. This informational guide can also be found on our district website at: www.easthaddamschools.org and on our Edline pages for each of the schools. You are encouraged to contact your primary care physician with any additional medical questions that you may have.

Additional *school-related* questions may be addressed to:

Mrs. Cynthia Mello, Principal
East Haddam Elementary School
873-5076
Cynthia.Mello@easthaddamschools.org

Mr. David Scata, Director PPS
BOE Offices
873-5046
David.Scata@easthaddamschools.org

Mr. Jason Peacock, Principal
Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School
873-5081
Jason.Peacock@easthaddamschools.org

Dr. Ellen Solek, Superintendent
BOE Offices
873-5090
Ellen.Solek@easthaddamschools.org

Mrs. Linda Dadona, Principal
Nathan Hale-Ray High School
873-5065
Linda.Dadona@easthaddamschools.org

What is Swine Flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A Influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get Swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from people-to-people, however, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You cannot get Swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. There is no vaccine available at this time to protect against Swine flu.

How can I Get Swine Flu?

Human-to-human transmission of Swine flu 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.

What are the Symptoms of Swine Flu?

The symptoms of swine flu in humans are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu. They include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea and Vomiting

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

At this time, CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

How can I help to prevent the spread of Swine Flu?

To help prevent the transmission of swine flu, good health and hygiene practices are essential. These include:

Washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If water is not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used. **When washing hands with soap and water:**

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to a friend!
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet

Remember: If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based gel to clean hands. When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply product to the palm of one hand
- Rub hands together
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry

Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze (if a tissue is not available, use the crook of the arm). Carefully dispose of the tissues in a wastebasket, and then wash your hands.

Do not share drinking cups or food.

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.

Stay home when you are sick. Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. **Keep sick children at home.** You will help prevent others from catching the illness.

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.

Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Students need to get plenty of sleep and physical activity, drink water, and eat good food to help them stay healthy in the winter and all year.

What do I do if I do not feel well at school?

If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea while you are in school:

1. **Immediately report to an adult that you do not feel well.**
2. **The adult will immediately send you to the nurse.**
3. **The nurse will assess your symptoms and if it is warranted, she will immediately call parents/guardians/emergency contacts and send you home.**
4. **You should contact your health care provider as soon as possible, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the East Haddam School District recommends that **you stay home from work or school for at least seven days after the start of symptoms and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.**

What do I do if I do not feel well while I am *not* at school?

Do not come to school. Stay home and contact your health care provider as soon as possible, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>
- CT State Department of Public Health: <http://www.ct.gov/dph/site/default.asp>

Please Note: The East Haddam School District strongly discourages the use of face masks and gloves anywhere on school district grounds at this time. According to local and state health officials, these materials have not proven to be highly effective in prevention of the flu virus and are deemed as highly distracting to the learning environment.