

The Ottawa County Health Department is intensely monitoring the reports of swine influenza. One suspect case has been reported in Michigan at this time. While there is no cause for alarm, prevention is important. Visit www.cdc.gov/swineflu for updates and further information. **The health department recommends the following strategies:**

Wash your hands: Washing your hands often with soap and water will help protect you from germs. While not a substitution for proper hand washing, you can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if needed.

Cover your mouth and nose: Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your inner elbow when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

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.

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

Ensure children and staff stay home from school when they are sick: You will help prevent others from catching the illness.

Guidance Regarding School Dismissal & Childcare Facility Closure:

- Dismissal of students should be strongly considered in schools ONLY with a confirmed or a suspected case epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case. For example, Johnny gets sick after visiting his aunt who has a confirmed case of swine influenza.
- Decisions regarding broader school dismissal within our community should be left to local public health authorities, taking into account the extent of the illness in the community.
- If the school dismisses students or a childcare facility closes, they should also cancel all school or childcare related gatherings and encourage parents and students to avoid congregating outside of the school.
- Schools and childcare facilities should consult with the Ottawa County Health Department for guidance on reopening. If no additional confirmed or suspected cases are identified among students (or school-based personnel) for a period of 7 days, schools may consider reopening.
- **Schools and childcare facilities in Ottawa County should begin to prepare for the possibility an outbreak and thus a school dismissal or childcare facility closure. This includes asking teachers, parents and officials in charge of critical school-associated programs (such as meal services) to make contingency plans.**

Other Social Distancing Interventions:

- Large gatherings linked to settings or institutions with laboratory-confirmed cases should be cancelled, for example a school event linked to a school with cases; other large gatherings in the community may not need to be cancelled at this time.
- Additional social distancing measures are currently not recommended.
- Persons with underlying medical conditions who are at high risk for complications of influenza may wish to consider avoiding large gatherings.

Should the children of seasonal workers from Mexico be allowed in school?

The Centers for Disease Control has not instated any travel restrictions. Borders are using passive surveillance to watch for illness among travelers. **Any** sick child, teacher or staff should be sent home from school.

