



County of Erie

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HEALTH ADVISORY #244

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HEALTH ADVISORY: NOVEL INFLUENZA A H1N1 (SWINE FLU) INFECTION UPDATE FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Please distribute immediately to School Superintendents, School Principals, School Nurses, Directors of Facilities and Maintenance, Daycare Providers and other appropriate school or childcare personnel.

General Updates

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has posted updated information regarding Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) on their website:
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm>
- The NYSDOH has posted updated data regarding confirmed cases of H1N1 Influenza in New York State: <http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/influenza/h1n1/>
- The ECDOH is no longer routinely notifying local media of daily new cases, but this information is available on our web site at http://www.erie.gov/health/swine_flu.asp. Click on the link called Areas with Positive Cases of Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus should you wish to obtain this information.
- Guidance for administration of Regents Exams to excluded students has been included in this advisory.

Erie County Department of Health Guidance

The ECDOH would like to provide the following guidance for schools to be utilized through the end of the school year.

Exclusion Guidelines

The ECDOH has developed the following guidelines for exclusion of individuals from school, work, etc. Please note that these guidelines are subject to change based on guidance from the

CDC, the characteristics of Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) in Erie County, and comments and feedback received from educational, healthcare, and community partners. However, please continue to use these guidelines until further notice.

- **Seven (7) Day Exclusion** - persons are to be excluded from daycare, school, work, and community activities for 7 days or 24 hours after all ILI* symptoms subside, whichever is longer, if they:
 - Have had a positive Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) test
OR
 - Have had a positive Influenza A test
OR
 - Have ILI* symptoms and are a member of a household in which another person has had a positive Novel Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) test
OR
 - Have ILI* symptoms and are a member of a household in which another person has had a positive Influenza A test
OR
 - Have ILI* symptoms and attend a school in a school district** with sustained transmission as determined by the ECDOH

- **Twenty-four (24) Hour Exclusion** - all persons with ILI* symptoms who do not meet any criteria for seven-day exclusion are to be excluded from daycare, school, work, and community activities for 24 hours after symptoms subside.

*ILI symptoms include a fever $\geq 100^{\circ}$ F AND a cough AND/OR a sore throat

**The most current list of schools with sustained transmission is posted on our website at http://www.erie.gov/health/swine_flu.asp

Recommendations for Administration of Regents Exams

The ECDOH acknowledges the importance of Regents Examinations and understands that the risk/benefit ratio may weigh more heavily on the side of relatively well students who are still in their 7 day exclusion period to take the examination despite the very small risk of disease transmission. In those instances, it is imperative that schools create the safest conditions possible; and, the ECDOH recommends the following procedures be implemented for administration of Regents Exams to students within the exclusion period:

- School districts should consider a missed Regents Exam due to H1N1 or Flu A exclusion similar to a missed exam for any other reason (illness, death in the family, etc.) and follow the usual make-up procedures (e.g. August examination date).
- However, in special circumstances it may be necessary to offer an alternative to some students (e.g., those who may not be able or available to sit for the next examination because of early college admission, military commitment, etc.). At those times, the ECDOH requires that reasonable measures be implemented to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff in the building. Excluded students may report to school under the following conditions:
 - Students should be relatively symptom free for at least 24 hours prior to the exam. For example, students may continue to exhibit a residual cough after resolution of all other symptoms.
 - Students should not utilize public or district transportation (school bus), which could co-locate them with non-excluded or ill persons.
 - Students should be instructed to enter the building at the entrance closest to the examination room and should not walk through hallways with other students.
 - Excluded students should be assigned to an examination room separate from other non-excluded students, but may be co-located with other excluded students. Schools may choose a conference room, alternate classroom, office or other location suitable for administration of the Regents Exam, but should maintain at least 6 feet distance between excluded students.
 - The faculty member/proctor of the exam should make every effort to avoid prolonged close proximity with the excluded student(s), and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet whenever possible.
 - The excluded student should be required to wear a surgical mask while in the school building; and, the proctor should be advised to wear a surgical mask whenever inside the examination room.
 - Other proctoring methods such as direct observation through a window or on closed circuit TV should be considered if permissible.
 - Excluded students should not be allowed to linger in the school or congregate with other students following the examination.
 - Any faculty member or proctor concerned about handling examination materials should wash their hands with soap and water.
 - The examination room should be cleaned following environmental guidance below.

Attendance/Absenteeism Reporting Requests

- We request that all districts/schools continue or begin reporting school absenteeism numbers, as well as numbers of students/faculty sent home due to illness for the remainder of the school year.
- Please continue to identify specific ILI or ILI related details on your surveillance reports.
- Please continue to submit surveillance information to ECDOH Epidemiology Program as early as possible each day.

- We request that each district/school evaluate the attendance procedures in place for summer school activities and determine the most appropriate mechanism of continued reporting to our office.
- We will continue to evaluate the active surveillance program on a local level and will provide you with updated information as it becomes available.

Behavioral Guidance

- At a minimum, students, faculty, and staff should routinely wash their hands after using the restroom; before eating or handling food; after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; after handling potentially contaminated objects; and whenever otherwise soiled.
- Schools should implement educational efforts, as well as daily routines to ensure proper hand washing.
- Although soap and water is the preferred method, waterless hand cleansers are an appropriate substitute when necessary.

Environmental Guidance

- Environmental infection control should focus on regular cleaning for most surfaces and only target use of disinfection for surfaces touched frequently by hand. High touch surfaces include door hardware, light switches, handrails, drinking fountains, elevator buttons, desktops/ tables, chairs, etc.
- All cleaning products should have viricidal activity.
- All cleaning products, detergents and disinfectants should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Extraordinary cleaning and decontamination of floors and other minimal touch surfaces (e.g., bookcases, filing cabinets, etc.) is not necessary.
- Environmental infection control actions are supplemental to increased emphasis on proper hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

Questions regarding this advisory should be directed to the ECDOH at (716) 858-7697 or DOH@erie.gov

Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary