

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009

### Question and Answer for Parents

- **Is it true there is a confirmed case of swine flu in Torbay?**
- **What are the symptoms of swine flu?**
- **Am I or my family at risk of getting swine flu?**
- **Why has the school closed?**
- **What if my son or daughter attends Paignton Community College?**
- **What measures can I take to prevent infection?**
- **Is there anything else that I should or shouldn't do?**
- **Is this the next influenza pandemic?**
- **If you or someone you know has been to the affected areas of Mexico and/or the U.S is feeling unwell what should they do?**
- **Is this the next influenza pandemic?**
- **How to keep up to date on swine flu**

#### **Is it true there is a confirmed case of swine flu in Torbay?**

Yes. There has been a confirmed case of swine flu in a year 7 student at Paignton Community College. The student has been to an affected area on holiday and had developed symptoms on her return.

#### **What are the symptoms of swine flu in humans?**

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

#### **Am I or my family at risk of getting swine flu?**

The Care Trust has been working closely with the Health Protection Agency, Torbay Council and Paignton Community College. Students who have had close contact with the girl at the college have been offered anti viral drugs (Tamiflu). The Care Trust is keen to reassure the local community that only those who attend the school in year seven or have had close contact with the student need to be offered the anti viral drugs.

#### **Why has the school closed?**

As an absolute precaution it has been agreed that the college will be closed from Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April until Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May so as to minimise any risk of the virus spreading.

#### **What if my son or daughter attends Paignton Community College?**

Any members of staff who have children that normally attend this college will need to make caring arrangements for them. The normal Special Leave Policy will apply including Emergency Leave for Carers of dependents.

If you have concerns about being able to attend work you should contact your line manager to discuss alternative ways of working during the period of school closure.

#### **What measures can I take to prevent infection?**

This swine flu virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. But, at this time, we don't know how easily the virus spreads between people.

General infection control practices and good hygiene when coughing and sneezing can help to reduce transmission of all viruses, including the human swine influenza. This includes:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Maintaining good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.

- Making sure your children follow this advice.

**Is there anything else that I should or shouldn't do?**

No, staff are expected to continue working as normal. However, we would ask you to be flexible and assist managers in covering any absences that may occur if colleagues with children at Paignton Community College are required to take Special Leave.

If you have any concerns regarding swine flu and the work that you undertake, then please do not hesitate to contact your manager.

**Is this the next influenza pandemic?**

It is too early to say whether the small number of cases internationally will lead to a larger outbreak or could represent the appearance of potential pandemic strain of influenza virus.

There is currently insufficient evidence to understand the extent to which cases are firmly linked or to make a complete assessment of the health implications of this new virus.

Experts from around the world are working in close collaboration with the World Health Organization to help determine what risk this situation poses to global public health.

**If you or someone you know has been to the affected areas of Mexico and/or the U.S and is feeling unwell what should they do?**

Anyone who has recently travelled to the affected areas and is experiencing influenza like illness should stay at home to limit contact with others.

Do not go to your GP. Stay at home and call your GP for advice.

Do not attend work. Telephone your manager to inform them.

**Further information**

To keep up to date on swine flu further information, including affected areas, is available at: <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>.

Information can also be found on the Health Protection Agency website at [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

If you or a member of your family become unwell after returning from an affected area, please phone NHS Direct on 0845 46 47. For general advice please phone our the national helpline on 0800 1513513.

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