

April 29, 2009

Dear Superintendent/School Administrator,

Fraser Health is currently working with other British Columbia health authorities, the BC Center for Disease Control, and the Public Health Agency of Canada, among other partners, to investigate and respond to the recent spread of swine flu. Three human cases of swine flu, all with travel history to Mexico, have been confirmed in British Columbia.

Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that regularly cause outbreaks of flu in pigs. Natural changes to this particular swine flu virus have allowed it to infect humans. The ability of this virus to spread easily from person to person is not fully known at this time and it is unclear if person-to-person spread is occurring in significant numbers in our region.

The symptoms of swine flu in people can be similar to the symptoms of a regular seasonal flu infection which may include fever, cough, headache, general aches, fatigue and other symptoms. Some people with swine flu have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

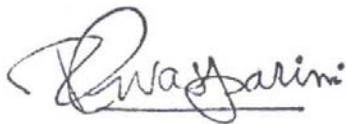
In response to the recent spread of swine flu, Fraser Health Authority is making the following precautionary recommendations:

- Continue all educational programs and school activities as per usual;
- Report any influenza-like illness school absenteeism of greater than 10 percent of the school population to your local health unit (see directory below);
- Allow well travelers arriving from Mexico or other swine flu affected areas to participate in regular activities. Travelers should monitor themselves for symptoms and, if experiencing flu-like illness, should follow the prevention tips below to avoid spreading illness to others;
- Encourage the following flu prevention tips within your school population:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve;
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand gels are also effective as long as hands are not visibly dirty (schools may wish to consider keeping these in classrooms);
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people;
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way;
 - If you get sick with mild illness, stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them;
 - If your symptoms become more severe contact your health care provider;

For more information on swine flu and for regular updates, please visit:

www.fraserhealth.ca/HealthTopics/CommunicableDiseases/swineflu/Pages/default.aspx

Sincerely,



Roland Guasparini, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Health Officer

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Hope HU Tel: 604-860-7630	Langley HU Tel: 604-539-2900	Maple Ridge HU Tel: 604-476-7000	Mission HU Tel: 604-814-5500	New Westminster HU Tel: 604-777-6740	Newport HU, Port Moody Tel: 604-949-7200
Newton HU, Surrey Tel: 604-592-2000	North Delta HU Tel: 604-507-5400	North Surrey HU Tel: 604-587-7900	Port Coquitlam HU Tel: 604-777-8700	South Delta HU Tel: 604-952-3550	White Rock HU Tel: 604-542-4000