



HADLOW COLLEGE HEALTH & SAFETY
DEPARTMENT

SWINE FLU PROCEDURE

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Swine Flu Procedure

Advice and guidance for Hadlow College staff and students.

General Information on swine flu

What is it?

Swine flu is a new strain of influenza type A that originated in pigs but can cause illness in humans and spread from person to person. As the virus is different in structure from seasonal flu very few people are immune to it therefore it can spread quickly and cause illness in a higher proportion of people.

Current Situation

Currently the College is operating as normal.

We are likely to see cases of swine flu in students and staff in the autumn months when there are more people around College and the weather conditions make it easier for the flu virus to spread. The situation at this time will be constantly monitored and reassessed if infection levels within departments and services mean they are unable to operate normally.

Measures are being taken to reduce the risk of infection spreading rapidly in college and the accommodation blocks

Regularly updated advice, information and 'alerts' for staff and students can be found on our web page

Hygiene measures

Please follow commonsense measures to limit infection risk:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Bin the tissue after use
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze and before eating
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as flu spreads this way.
- Stay away from others if you develop flu-like symptoms.

Symptoms of swine flu

These are similar to ordinary influenza:

- A sudden onset of cough or fever (38 degrees or more)
- Sore throat



- Headache
- Chills
- Aching muscles
- Difficulty breathing
- Tiredness

Incubation period

The time between being infected and falling ill is usually between 2 and 5 days but can be as long as 7 days.

Infectious period

Someone can infect others with the swine flu virus from 12 hours before falling unwell and for 5 – 7 days from the start of their illness. They are most infectious during the time they have symptoms.

How infection spreads

Swine flu mainly spreads from person to person by breathing in infectious droplets coughed or sneezed out by someone with the infection. Droplets can travel a metre and remain suspended in the air for a short time.

The virus can survive for some hours on hard surfaces. Hands can be contaminated through touching door handles or other hard surfaces contaminated with the virus. If you then touch your mouth before washing your hands you can then catch the infection.

Someone in my house has swine flu, should I stay off work?

If you have no symptoms there is no need to stay away from work (unless a medical professional advises). You will not necessarily get swine flu however you should be vigilant for symptoms over the next 7 days.

Advice if you develop flu like symptoms

If you develop any swine flu symptoms the college advises you to contact the National Pandemic Flu Service on 0800 1 513 100. Do not go to your GP's surgery unless you have been specifically advised to do so.

Staff: Let your manager know you are unwell and go home.

Students in College accommodation: Alert Student Support Services and stay in your room as much as possible. Avoid using kitchens to prepare food at the same time as other students, wash your hands before leaving your room.



Students in private accommodation: Inform College of your condition and stay indoors at home until you have recovered.

All staff / students should ensure they are registered with a doctor.

Advice if you are diagnosed with swine flu

Staff:

- Follow the advice given by your doctor / NHS direct and inform your line manager
- You can return to work 7 days after your symptoms began or after you have completed 5 days of treatment with Tamiflu provided your fever has settled.
- If you are off work for more than 7 calendar days then you will need to send a medical certificate to your line manager, in line with the College sickness absence procedure.

Students:

- Follow the advice given by your doctor / NHS direct and inform the student absence monitor.
- You can return to lessons 7 days after your symptoms began or after you have completed 5 days of treatment with Tamiflu provided your fever has settled.

Advice if a colleague falls ill with swine flu

The risk of contracting swine flu from a colleague is small. The usual distance between people in an office or teaching room will reduce exposure to infectious droplets. However all staff and students should be vigilant for symptoms.

The swine flu virus can survive for up to 24 hours on hard surfaces like desk tops and door handles, but does not become airborne again after settling.

If someone has to work at the same desk as a person who has become ill then they should wipe over the workstation with a damp cloth and domestic cleaner and ensure they wash their hands after using the person's computer.

The Health Protection Agency no longer routinely provides preventative treatment to contacts of people with swine flu.



Advice on reducing cross infection in shared work areas

Shared computers / hot desks

- Computer keyboards and mice can be contaminated if used by someone with swine flu therefore wash your hands after using a computer or hot desk that someone else has used on the same day.

Staff refreshment areas

- Foods and crockery can become contaminated if left out so store them in cupboards
- Wash your hands before preparing or eating any food, keep food covered.
- Wash any cups or crockery that has been left out on worktops before using them, even if they appear clean.

Open plan offices

- Wash hands before eating or drinking as the flu virus can survive on desk tops, door handles and other hard surfaces you may touch for up to 24 hours.
- Follow the hygiene advice given.

Steps taken by the College to reduce the risk of swine flu spreading

- Cleaning arrangements are in place across the College sites and accommodation blocks and more emphasis will be placed on touch surfaces to reduce the risk of infection spreading.
- The Health & Safety Coordinator is keeping a close watch on the situation and if needed will issue further advice as the position in College evolves.

College contacts / Useful websites

Health & Safety Coordinator

- Becky Jones 01732 850551 ext 622 Mobile 07711 087774

Health & Safety Manager

- Dave Charrington 01732 850551 ext 229 Mobile 07970 565409



Updated advice and information can be found on the College website. Additionally the following websites may be useful:

- www.hpa.org.uk
- www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu
- NHS Direct
- NHS Choices website