

Kwantlen Polytechnic University Notice Board

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Campus: All campuses

From: Mo Bual

Subject: **Human Swine Influenza**

Kwantlen Polytechnic University is continuously monitoring the Human Swine Influenza Outbreak and will alert the university community of any warranted concerns.

Below you will find some basic information from the Public Health Canada website regarding the Human Swine Influenza in a Q&A type setting. The links at the end of this message will take you to the websites of other regulatory bodies within Canada/British Columbia (Public Health Association of Canada, Government of BC, and Fraser Health Authority) and can provide further information.

At the present time, the only action required is appropriate hygiene (hand, cough, etc.) observance. Please continue to follow the procedures listed below:

- Observance of the hand washing procedures posted in all Kwantlen washrooms
- When/If you cough, please cover your mouth with a tissue or your arm and immediately wash/sanitize your hands if necessary
- If you are experiencing extreme flu like symptoms, please consult with your physician before returning to work

Questions & Answers from Public Health Association of Canada

Q1. I have heard that people are becoming sick with swine influenza. What is it?

Human swine influenza has been reported in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Swine influenza (sometimes called swine flu) is a strain of the influenza virus that usually affects pigs, but which may also make people sick.

Human swine influenza is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of the regular human seasonal flu. The symptoms include fever, fatigue, lack of appetite, coughing and sore throat. Some people with human swine influenza have also reported vomiting and diarrhea.

Q2. How can an influenza virus spread from pigs to people?

Different strains of influenza are commonly circulating in our environment, including strains that can cause illness in humans, birds and pigs.

Sometimes, humans and animals can pass strains of flu back and forth to one another through direct close contact - such as in pig production barns and livestock exhibits at fairs. For people in close contact with pigs, the recommendations to avoid infection are the same as for regular seasonal influenza – frequent hand washing, getting an annual flu shot, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when ill.

When a swine influenza virus does affect a human, there is also a risk that the animal influenza can mutate and then spread directly between humans.

Q3. Is human swine influenza contagious? How does it spread between people?

Yes, this virus is contagious. Since some of the people who have become ill in the United States and Mexico have not been in direct contact with pigs, we know that the virus has spread from person to person.

More investigation is needed on how easily the virus spreads between people, but it is believed that it is spread the same way as regular seasonal influenza.

Influenza and other respiratory infections are transmitted from person to person when germs enter the nose and/or throat. Coughs and sneezes release germs into the air where they can be breathed in by others. Germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs, where they can be picked up on hands and transmitted to the respiratory system when someone touches their mouth and/or nose.

Q4. What can I do to protect myself from infection?

The Public Health Agency advises Canadians to:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze in your arm or sleeve
- Get your annual flu shot
- Keep doing what you normally do, but stay home if sick
- Check www.fightflu.ca for more information
- Check www.voyage.gc.ca for travel notices and advisories
- Talk to a health professional if you experience severe flu-like symptoms

For further information, please visit one of the following links:

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/faq_rg_swine-eng.php#faq1

<http://www.fraserhealth.ca/HealthTopics/CommunicableDiseases/swineflu/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile108.stm>