

Swine Flu Anxiety and Prevention

While the media coverage about the Swine Flu outbreak can make people feel on edge and anxious, education is the great equalizer! Instead of choosing to stress which tends to make you more susceptible to illness, get busy finding out the facts about Swine Flu and learn about how to prevent the spread of germs at home, school and work. Here are some tips for staying healthy, calm and informed.

Stay Healthy

These steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze-throw the tissue away immediately after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based (60-95 percent) hand cleaner.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If you get the flu, stay home from work, school, and social gatherings. In this way you will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs often spread this way.

Stay Informed

- Knowing the facts is the best preparation. Identify sources you can count on for reliable information. If a pandemic occurs, having accurate and reliable information will be critical.
- A source for updated information on swine and pandemic influenza is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline at: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). This line is available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Look for information on your local and state government Web sites.
- Listen to local and national radio, watch news reports on television, and read your newspaper and other sources of printed and reliable web-based information.
- Talk to your local health care providers and public health officials.

Stay Calm

It's important to be cautious, heed warnings if they are issued, and do what you can to prepare and prevent, but there's no need to panic. Anxiety that you may be feeling is your body's natural way to motivate action, but once you've done what you can to prepare, it helps to let go of anxiety. Because stress affects your immune system, excessive worry won't help you, and at this point, there's no call for it. If you find yourself stressing over the Swine Flu outbreak after you've taken every possible step to prepare, try the following stress management techniques:

- **Meditation:** Meditation is one of the most popular stress relievers for good reason: it brings far-reaching benefits!

- **Breathing Exercises:** Breathing exercises are simple and convenient. They're easy to learn and can be practiced anywhere.
- **Yoga:** Yoga can help support physical and emotional health in many ways.
- **Exercise:** If you find yourself absorbed watching the updates on television, turn it off and get outside. Working out or simply going for a walk is a great way to blow off steam, keep your body healthy, and relieve stress at the same time.
- **Listen to Music:** Music can be a great stress reliever, and putting on some soothing music can help you and everyone around you passively relieve stress.
- **Talk To A Professional:** If you feel persistently anxious about this or anything in your life, the anxiety is interfering with your regular activities, and regular stress management techniques aren't helping, it's a good idea to talk to a counselor or doctor for further help.

Workplace Prevention

Managers can prepare their employees by educating them about how to help prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria in the workplace. Employees should know and practice routine hygiene measures such as:

- Cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash their hands often. Proper hand washing technique includes washing with soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
- In addition managers should encourage annual vaccinations. While a seasonal human vaccination will not specifically protect against swine influenza, it can help prevent “co-infection” of two different influenza viruses, which could lead to the emergence of a new strain of virus that could cause widespread illness.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Your Magellan Program

Your Magellan program offers a wide range of information and self-help tools to help you relieve stress and anxious feelings. Log on to www.MagellanHealth.com/member and register with your program's toll-free number. Or, call your toll-free number [at 800-523-5668](tel:800-523-5668) to speak with a professional.