

A MESSAGE FROM UUFH ABOUT FLU CONCERNS

May 21, 2009

Dear Fellowshipers:

Many of you may have concerns about how UUFH is prepared to deal with ongoing worries about the spread of the H1N1 (“swine”) flu. We want to reassure you that we are monitoring the situation and hope you find the following information helpful.

As you no doubt have heard, the number of confirmed human cases of H1N1 flu in the United States has been increasing. There will continue to be some uncertainty about the outbreak as the virus evolves and transmission potentially spreads. However, experts are cautioning “preparation, not panic” at this point. (It’s important to keep in mind that flu regularly results in thousands of deaths each year, and that “pandemic” indicates spread of the disease, not necessarily its severity – you can have, for example, a pandemic of mild cases. Those most at risk at this point are those usually at risk in similar situations of contagion: the very old or young, pregnant women, and those who may be immune-compromised for other reasons.)

Faith communities, where there are frequently large gatherings, may pose additional challenges. However, while the disease may be *spread* in an airborne manner, it is usually *caught* by contact with infected surfaces. So, although it sounds simple, observing basic hygiene principles is still the best way to avoid both spreading and catching the disease. Please therefore note the information provided below.

We will continue to keep you informed as we get updates. If you have any concerns, or want to share information (such as questionable travel, a case of illness, or a local school closing), please contact the UUFH office during business hours (631-427-9547) or UUFH President Marc Leopold (631-673-3539) or me (516-819-9307) at other times. Your concerns will be brought to the attention of Rev. Paul and the Executive Committee so that we can make an informed decision about how to proceed. If you have special needs or require additional support, remember our Pastoral Care Associates are also ready to assist you.

Stay healthy, use Kleenex, and as my Mom always said -- keep those hands away from your face!

In fellowship,
Maria Nielsen
Vice President
UUFH Board of Trustees

INFORMATION ABOUT H1N1 (“Swine”) FLU

Transmission: While there is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu (and last year’s flu shot probably would not protect against this strain), there are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. At this point, the CDC believes that swine flu may spread as does seasonal

flu, and therefore basic hygiene – such as effective hand-washing or the use of hand sanitizing gels – is important in reducing the possibility of infection or transmission:

- Frequent **hand-washing**, with soap and warm water for a sufficient period, and drying hands promptly, is very important in avoiding both spreading germs and becoming infected yourself. (UUFH is ensuring that soap and towels are readily available in all rest rooms.) Tell your kids (and remind yourself!) that “sufficient time” means the time it takes to sing the alphabet song!
- As germs can live on surfaces such as doorknobs and handrails or contact with other surfaces, **avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth** and reinforce this with your kids. Very important! This is one of the best ways to avoid contagion.
- To reduce susceptibility, try to maintain good general health, with proper rest, nutrition and exercise.
- If you believe you may have been exposed to the virus, or if you start to feel sick, immediately limit contact with others to avoid infecting them. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue if you cough or sneeze and discard the tissue immediately in a trash receptacle. (UUFH is ensuring that tissues are readily available around the Fellowship premises, but if you can’t get to a tissue in time, sneeze into your folded elbow – this will keep the germs off your hands and reduce spreading.) Seek medical attention promptly.

Watching for symptoms: Swine flu symptoms appear to be similar to the symptoms of regular flu and may include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, lethargy, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. Additional, more severe symptoms are listed on the briefing from the NYC Department of Health (listed below).

Anyone experiencing possible symptoms should do the following:

- Seek medical attention if you experience symptoms such as fever, cough or sore throat.
- You do not need to go to the hospital for mild illness, but anyone with severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or chest or abdominal pain, should seek health care and treatment immediately.
- Leave the school, work or Fellowship environment or remain home to avoid contact with others in order to reduce the likelihood of transmission
- Stay home for at least seven days, and don’t return until 48 hours after the symptoms (such as fever) end.
- Contact the UUFH office so that we can be aware of your well-being, and also consider taking any appropriate measures – we’ll do our best to respect your privacy.

Travel to “hot-spot” areas: Delaying non-critical travel to locations with high illness transmission rates should be considered. Recent and current travelers to locations with documented swine flu cases should be aware that people infected with swine flu can be potentially contagious beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to seven or more days after becoming sick (children may be contagious for longer periods).

Staying informed: Knowing the facts is the best preparation and can help calm anxiety (which doesn't help your immune system). If the current situation should worsen, having accurate and reliable information will be critical. The following are helpful resources for additional and ongoing information:

- NYC Department of Health:
http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/cd/swine_flu_faq.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm,
<http://pandemicflu.gov/faq/swineflu/>
- World Health Organization:
<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/faq/en/index.html>

In Sum: Practice good hygiene * be alert for symptoms * leave the Fellowship premises or stay home if you experience any questionable symptoms, and seek medical guidance * let us know if you become ill or have concerns or information to share

If you wish to "opt-out" of all email blasts, please direct your request to uufhoffice@optonline.net.