

First Presbyterian Church Bellingham and H1N1

9/29/2009

(An actual picture of the H1N1 virus)



In order to do our best to supply our church community and visitors with a healthy atmosphere, we as a church want to do our part to disseminate information regarding the H1N1 (Swine flu) virus. This information is not meant to generate an environment of fear, but rather one of education and caution.

It is currently the practice of FPC to provide hand sanitizers throughout the church building, and most definitely in the children's classrooms, restrooms, and the Lobby.

It is the policy of FPC that all persons handling food first wash their hands and then use Nitrile (non latex) gloves prior to handling the food. Nitrile gloves are made from a synthetic polymer, and these gloves don't contain any protein so they are less likely to cause irritation and allergic reactions

FPC highly recommends the washing of hands for its employees and congregants, especially children who are taken to the restroom during their stay in the children's classes.

The following recommendations are from the Center for Disease Control (<http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu>) and are only being published by FPC as a precautionary measure. FPC is not responsible for erroneous facts as published by the CDC or other government agencies in regards to H1N1.

Effective ways to protect yourself and children from getting the disease:

- Avoid close contact with people.
- Carry tissues and hand sanitizer, and know how to use them: Sneeze or cough into the tissue, throw it in the wastebasket (not on a desk, table, etc.); Put a dime size blob of hand sanitizer on hands and rub together until dry, being sure to rub between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Don't share drinks or food, and don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.

Emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention, according to the CDC:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

More info:

The flu virus is mainly transmitted from person to person by sneezing or coughing, but can also survive for 2 to 8 hours. (If you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your nose or eyes, you can be infected.) The most important thing to consider about swine flu is how to teach good public health preventive measures that are based on actual facts about the way the flu virus is transmitted.

Flu Spreads:

The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

People with novel H1N1 flu who are cared for at home should:

- check with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema
- check with their health care provider about whether they should take antiviral medications
- keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick. Do not go to work or school while ill
- stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone, except to seek medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- get plenty of rest
- drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated
- cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands
- wear a facemask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.
- be watchful for emergency warning signs (see below) that might indicate you need to seek medical attention.

Recommendations for while at church:

- Choose to not shake hands and/or hug others
- Use the hand sanitizers that are provided through the church building
- Wash your hands after using the restroom
- Wash your hands if you are in the kitchen area
- Use Nitrile gloves if you work with food
- During Café Pres, use utensils to pick up food items

- If working with the children, use the hand sanitizer frequently on yourself and on the children
- Sterilize toys that are used by children after each event