



*Medicine Hat  
Catholic Board of Education*

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## SWINE INFLUENZA (FLU) ALERT – PUBLIC NOTICE

Release Date: **Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

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Dear Parents & Guardians of students in Medicine Hat & Bow Island Catholic Schools:

Attached to the reverse side of this letter is the latest Alberta Health and Wellness news release regarding the Human Swine Flu reported in Mexico, the United States and Canada. Alberta Health and Wellness is advising all Albertans to take simple precautions to help stop the spread of the influenza virus.

***What we are doing in our schools:***

- Concentrated cleaning & disinfecting of high traffic & frequent contact areas such as door handles; push/pull plates; light switches, water fountains, computer keyboards etc.;
- Daily reminders to staff & students to wash their hands frequently with soap & water;
- Washroom and classroom sinks will have ample supplies of soap and paper supplies.

***What can you do?***

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school;
- Teach your children to wash their hands frequently with soap and water. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself;
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or a sleeve and by coughing and sneezing into the inside of your elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself, don't cough or sneeze onto your hands;
- People who are sick should stay home until they are feeling better and should avoid other people until they are better.

More information at the following websites:

Public Health Agency of Canada  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/>

Health Link Alberta Toll Free 1-866-408-5465  
<http://www.healthlinkalberta.ca/default.htm>

Our School Division is concentrating on prevention and preparedness. On an ongoing basis, we will communicate through our Division website @ [www.mhcbe.ab.ca](http://www.mhcbe.ab.ca) and by sending notes home with students. We will keep you informed as we become informed.

Thank you for your co-operation.

*Mr. David Leahy, Superintendent of Schools (403) 527-2292.*

*April 28, 2009*

## **Alberta confirms two cases of human swine influenza**

*Edmonton ...* Two cases of human swine influenza have been confirmed in Alberta, one in Calgary, and the other in northern Alberta.

Both individuals are male and have experienced a mild form of human swine flu. Neither were hospitalized during their illness. The male from northern Alberta has fully recovered from flu symptoms and the other male from Calgary has nearly recovered from symptoms. Both individuals contracted the influenza virus during recent travel to Mexico.

“These cases show that our monitoring and surveillance system is working as it should,” said Dr. André Corriveau, Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer of Health. “It was only a matter of time until cases of human swine influenza would show up in Alberta. These cases are both mild, similar to recent cases identified in Nova Scotia and British Columbia, and across the United States.”

Alberta issued a public health alert two days ago in light of human swine influenza cases reported in Mexico, the United States and Canada. The province is working closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada to monitor for influenza activity related to the new strain.

“All medical officers of health will continue to monitor for new cases of human swine flu,” said Courriveau. “We recommend anyone with a fever or cough who has returned from a recent trip to Mexico to recover from their illness at home, and call Health Link Alberta before seeking medical attention.”

Albertans are reminded that hand washing is the single most important way to avoid getting the flu. Don’t touch your eyes, nose or mouth after touching door handles and other surfaces that may harbour influenza and other viruses. Those with flu-like symptoms can help prevent the spread of illness by washing their hands frequently and practicing proper cough and sneeze etiquette. People with the flu-like symptoms should stay at home and avoid public places until they have recovered.

Anyone with a fever or cough who has recently travelled to Mexico or the southern U.S. can call Health Link Alberta toll-free 1-866-408-LINK (5465); in Edmonton, call 780-408-LINK (5465); in Calgary, call 403-943-LINK (5465).

More information is available on-line at [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca).