

Senses Foundation's Swine Flu Response

Senses Foundation, like most other disability service providers, is taking Swine Flu very seriously and this is a summary of how it is responding.

Definitions:

A Pandemic is a disease outbreak that occurs worldwide when:

- A new strain of a virus emerges to which no-one is immune;
- The virus causes disease in humans;
- The virus is easily spread between humans.

Currently the pandemic illnesses of concern are

- Avian Flu H5N1 and
- Swine Flu H1N1.

Groups of people who are at risk of serious illness should they "catch" swine flu are

Babies and children under 5
Pregnant women
People 50 years of age and older
People of any age with chronic respiratory conditions including asthma
People with underlying medical conditions

Training DVD

Senses Foundation has produced a DVD explaining a pandemic and the infection control precautions essential in stopping or slowing the spread of a pandemic.

If you would like a copy of this video please telephone 94735400 to request a copy.

A summary of Senses Foundation's Swine Flu Response Plan

Notification

Clients

If a client is diagnosed with swine flu, or could have swine flu for example their close family member or someone they live or work with has been diagnosed or could have swine flu.

A Senses Foundation staff member must *immediately* be told.

Staff

If a staff member is diagnosed with swine flu, or could have swine flu for example their close family member or someone they live or work with has been diagnosed or could have swine flu.

They must not present for work and must *immediately* inform their supervisor.

The Plan

A plan will then be developed to ensure the safety of clients, client's families, staff and people with whom clients may come in contact with, taking into account any clients and staff in high risk categories. The plan will be immediately put in place and reviewed on a daily basis.

In some cases where there is a Swine Flu outbreak, the Senses Foundation service may need to be ceased for seven days or until there is an "all clear".

In some cases where there is a Swine Flu outbreak, as in the accommodation service, the house will be put in isolation with clients staying within the house and not going out to work, shopping, recreational activities etc for the seven days until the risk of spreading the disease is over or until any sick people are better.

In some cases, it may be necessary to change the normal staff a client has because they may be part of a high risk group, for example they may be pregnant.

All this is worked out in The Plan and communicated to client, family and staff.

Period Of Isolation For Clients And Staff

For swine flu, the period of isolation required for staff and clients who have the disease or where it is suspected that they could have the disease, is seven days.

Keeping Yourself As Safe As Possible

While we do not have the power to stop the virus, we do have the means to take precautions so that we reduce the risk of becoming sick. Some of them may seem like general common sense, but it is always nice to see reminders in writing. Here they are:

1. Stay as far away as possible from anyone you know who is sick.
2. Wash your hands. Wash your hands. Wash your hands. If soap is not available, use alcohol-based hand gels with at least 60 percent alcohol frequently.
3. Hold a tissue to your mouth when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue immediately in a bin.
4. Masks should be worn if you must be near people who are ill.
5. Swine flu symptoms are similar to the pains of the regular flu. If you experience high fever, coughing, body aches and a runny nose for one day with no signs of getting better, visit your doctor.

6. If you are sick or think you are getting the disease, avoid leaving home except to see your doctor. Do not go to work or school while you're ill. If you have to leave your house, wear a mask so that you don't spread germs to others.
7. If you are the parent of a young toddler, carry alcohol wipes with you wherever you go. It's difficult to monitor thumb sucking at all times, but you can be prepared to effectively wipe away germs whenever you see your child engage in hand-to-mouth activity.
8. Make it a point to stay on top of the latest swine flu findings, while continuing to lead your life the best way you can. If you're not ill, you don't have to stay indoors. But, by all means, you should stay informed.

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