

## **HEALTH ALERT:**

The Health District has put up the following website for the public to obtain information about swine flu. Remember to report all suspect cases of swine flu to the Galveston County Health District Epidemiology Services at: **Phone:** (409) 938-2232, **Fax:** (409) 938-2399. Please check the website regularly as new information is added. The website contains important information regarding lab testing protocol. PLEASE DISTRIBUTE.

<http://www.gchd.org/index.htm>

As of this afternoon, there are 41 confirmed cases in the United States. 3 cases in Texas. No confirmed cases in Galveston County. The Health District has activated its pandemic flu plan, has issued health advisories to the medical community, has started active surveillance of hospitals and the medical community, has provided assistance and information to schools, and is working with state and federal officials to prepare for the possibility of impact to Galveston County.

***At this point, the Health District's primary message is prevention - practice hygiene and sanitation to avoid getting infected. If you are sick, stay home and seek medical attention. The goal is to avoid infection and avoid spreading to others.***

**PRIMARY PREVENTION** - *(A nice excerpt from information provided by UT Health Science Center...)*

### **Proper hand hygiene**

There's a right way and useless way to wash hands—and wash away—micro-organisms. The object is to break down the protective membranes of germs, dislodge them from your hands and let them go down the drain. Plain soap in the right hands is strong stuff.

1. Lather well with a bar of soap or squirt a coin size of liquid soap in the palm of your hand.
2. Vigorously rub your hands together, soap up between your fingers, AND your wrists, front and back for 15 seconds. Sing the first chorus of any song you know and that'll take you through the 15 seconds.
3. Rinse under warm, RUNNING water. Remember, the object is to dislodge germs. The force of water is key.
4. Dry thoroughly your hands with a disposable towel or under the blower, again, rubbing your hands together.
5. Discard the towel.

### **If you're using alcohol-based gels as hand cleansers:**

1. Put a dime-sized amount in one hand.
2. Vigorously rub your hands together and in between your fingers until the GEL IS DRY—about 30 seconds.

### **DO NOT touch your face!**

1. Once your hands are clean, do not touch your face, nose, eyes or lips.
2. Rubbing your eyes and nose provides a freeway for micro-organisms and good breeding ground once they've arrived.

### **Cover your cough**

1. If you must cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a tissue, your sleeve or your hand.
2. Throw the tissue away in a waste basket. Do not leave discarded tissues on your desk or other surfaces.
3. Then, wash you hands thoroughly.

### **The throw-it-away part is essential.**

1. Micro-organisms live a life span from a few seconds to days on inanimate surfaces such as desks, table tops, faucets...tissues. If your tissues are scattered on your coffee table, they then are in contact with

community surfaces. Both the tissues and the surface it sits on can spread germs to the person who touches the coffee table.

**If you feel sick:**

1. If you begin to feel ill: feverish, achy, have a dry, painful cough, sore throat, go home from school or work and call your health care provider for further instructions.
2. If you feel sick with flu-like symptoms and you care for the very young or the very elderly or the chronically ill, inform your health care provider when you call their office.
3. If you have recently traveled to Mexico or to one of the areas worldwide that has reported a swine flu outbreak, inform your health care provider. He or she may prefer to treat you with prescription anti-viral medications from home, or may request that you come in for a visit. Follow instructions from your health care providers.

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