

Swine Flu Talking Points

Questions and Answers for Patients and Families

One of the core values at LifePath Hospice and Good Shepherd Hospice is “Patients and families come first.” With the recent outbreak of swine flu reaching pandemic status, that core value is at the forefront of the care we provide.

The following are answers to possible questions. Please share this information so you can reassure patients, families and community members that the organization is monitoring the situation to insure that we implement any and all health precautions.

What is LifePath Hospice/Good Shepherd Hospice doing about the swine flu outbreak?

LifePath Hospice/Good Shepherd Hospice managers are constantly monitoring information from federal, state and local health authorities regarding the swine flu outbreak.

The organization has an ample amount of supplies (gloves, face masks, sanitizing hand gel, etc.) to meet a heightened need. We are monitoring this inventory to reorder supplies if the demand increases.

In addition, the organization is in contact with the county’s Emergency Operation Center to coordinate care in the event of an emergency. LifePath Hospice/Good Shepherd Hospice senior managers have a plan in place in the event the flu outbreak reaches an emergency level.

Can I get the swine flu from eating or preparing pork products?

NO. The swine flu is a virus, and viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get swine flu from eating pork or pork products. It is safe to eat properly handled and cooked pork products.

How does someone get the swine flu?

People get the swine flu from the swine flu virus (also called H1N1), which spreads the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are mainly spread from person to person when someone with the flu coughs or sneezes. Sometimes people may get the flu by touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Is there a vaccine?

Currently there is no vaccine available to protect against the swine flu. If someone catches the flu, he/she should contact his/her doctor immediately. If caught early enough, doctors can prescribe a medication to lessen the symptoms.

What can I do to keep from getting the flu?

- First and foremost – wash your hands frequently with warm soap and water for 20 seconds.
- When soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based gel sanitizer or hand wipes. When using a hand gel, you do not need water because the alcohol in the product kills the germs. Just rub the gel into your hands until the gel is dry.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash right after you use it.
- If you do not have a tissue when you sneeze or cough, cover mouth and nose with your upper shirt sleeve.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Try not to touch surfaces that might be contaminated with the flu virus, such as phones or computer keyboards.

What should I do if the patient or a family member gets the swine flu?

If you suspect the patient or a family member has the swine flu, contact your LifePath Hospice/Good Shepherd Hospice primary care nurse.

Is there someplace where I can get more information?

You can get more information from the Centers for Disease Control's web site at www.cdc.gov/swineflu/