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Influenza – Be Protected!

As you are well aware, the H1N1, also being referred to as the Swine Influenza is quickly moving across our state. Each day we are hearing reports of school closings due to this illness. It is important that our school and community be proactive in our attempt to prevent this flu from becoming widespread in our county. There are simple steps you can take to help you and your family from either contracting the illness or spreading it.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have posted on their website, www.cdc.gov, good information about this particular strain of flu. It should answer almost any question you might have regarding this situation. You may visit the Texas AgriLife Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) website at <http://texashelp.tamu.edu> to find a wealth of information on being prepared for a pandemic flu outbreak. It also lists various resources that will help you be more informed in the event of any type of disaster. One item of particular interest is the Pandemic Preparedness Supply List. It is a recommended list of items you need to have in your home if your family becomes ill. Actually, these items need to be in your home at all times in the event of any type of disaster. Below is the list from our website:

Pandemic Preparedness Supply List

- * Water (1 gallon per person per day), electrolyte fluids (from a recipe or ready-made)
- * Nonperishable food, canned meat, fruit, vegetables, soups, protein and fruit bars, dry cereal and granola, juice, comfort foods
- * Disposable medical gloves, N-95 mask and surgical mask
- * Soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- * Disposal tissues, toilet tissue, paper towels
- * Infant disposable diapers, feminine hygiene products
- * Disinfectant (EPA-approved with registration number), dilute bleach
- * Thermometer, first aid kit, pain and fever relievers, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, multivitamins, anti-diarrheal medicine, anti-nausea medicine, cough suppressants, chronic health condition medication and supplies
- * Disposable dishes and utensils, manual can opener
- * Emergency supply kit
- * Pet medications, food, and supplies
- * Entertainment, games, toys, books, videos, crafts, etc.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has posted the following information on what you can do to stay healthy. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

Stay informed. This website will be updated regularly as information becomes available. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

Take everyday actions to stay healthy.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, germs spread that way.

Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

Develop a family emergency plan as a precaution. This should include storing a supply of food, medicines, facemasks, alcohol-based hand rubs and other essential supplies.

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO for more information.

For further information on this topic, please feel free to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service at 903/473-5000, ext. 160. If we work together as a community, hopefully we can prevent this influenza from becoming widespread in Rains County.

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