

Health Advice for Schools on Prevention of Human Swine Influenza

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Make sure hands are washed under the following conditions

- After touching public installations or equipment, such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs
- Before handling food, eating or drinking
- After visiting the toilet
- After handling objects soiled by faeces, respiratory or other body secretion.
- After playing with toys or animals/pets
- When hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions (e.g. after sneezing)
- Before touching eyes/nose/mouth
- After changing diapers or handling soiled articles when looking after young children or the sick
- Before and after visiting hospitals or residential care homes.

In general, we should wash hands with soap and water when hands are visibly soiled or likely contaminated with body fluid, for example, after using the toilet or changing the diapers, after coughing or sneezing. When hands are not visibly soiled, 70-80% alcohol-based handrub is also effective for disinfection.

Students/Staff members should wash hands properly

a) Washing hands with liquid soap by following the steps below

- Wet hands under running water.
- Apply liquid soap and rub hands together to make a soapy lather.
- Away from the running water, rub the palms, back of hands, between fingers, back of fingers, thumbs, finger tips and wrists. Do this for at least 20 seconds
- Rinse hands thoroughly under running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly with either a clean cotton towel, a paper towel, or a hand dryer.
- Cleaned hands should not touch the water tap directly again. The tap may be turned off:
 - By using the towel wrapping the faucet; or
 - After splashing water to clean the faucet

Points to note

- Used paper towel should be disposed properly.
- Towels should never be shared. Towel should be properly cleaned after use.
- Personal towels must be stored properly, not to be shared and washed at least once daily. It is even better to have more than one towel for frequent replacement.
- Cover both mouth and nose with a handkerchief while sneezing and coughing.
- Wash hair and take shower daily for personal hygiene.
- Wear gloves when handling wounds, nose bleeding and other contaminated wastes;

wash hands afterwards immediately.

- Never share towels, handkerchiefs, toothbrushes, or eating utensils or other personal belongings.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Sick students/staff members and their carers should put on masks to prevent virus from spreading. Patients should consult doctor and stay at home until the symptoms disappeared completely.
- Hands should be washed or disinfected by alcohol-based handrub after distribution and collection of examination papers in public examination centres.

b) Using alcohol-based handrub to disinfect hands

- Apply a palmful of alcohol-based handrub and cover all surfaces of the hands. Rub the palms, back of hands, between fingers, back of fingers, thumbs, finger tips and wrists for at least 20 seconds until the hands are dry.

ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE

Ensure good ventilation

- Open all windows if possible from time to time to allow good ventilation.
- Keep air-conditioners well-maintained and wash the dust-filters frequently.
- Open windows and use exhaust fans to improve ventilation under crowded conditions.

Keep school premises clean

Choice of disinfectants

- Different types of disinfectants can be used to clean the environment. Household bleach, which normally contains 5.25% hypochlorite solution, is the most convenient and effective disinfectant. The 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (5.25%) is sufficient for general cleaning purpose and 1 in 49 diluted household bleach should be used for places contaminated with respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta. Please refer to Appendix 1 for procedures of preparing/using diluted bleaches.
- Besides, many detergents in the market are claimed to have a disinfectant composition. Purchasers should check the content and note the directions for use because the effectiveness of different disinfectants will be different.
- Since household bleach contains hypochlorite solution, care should be taken to avoid its use in metal surfaces as chlorine is corrosive to metal. The 70% alcohol can be used if disinfection of metal surfaces is required.

General cleaning

- Clean and disinfect the school premises including classrooms, kitchen, canteen, toilets, bathrooms, and school buses with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 99 parts of water), wait until the disinfectant dries up, then rinse with water and keep dry.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as furniture, toys and commonly shared items (such as computer keyboards) at least daily by using appropriate disinfectant (e.g. 1 in 99 diluted household bleach by mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 99 parts of water for non-metallic surfaces; or 70% alcohol for metallic surfaces), leave for 15-30 minutes, and then rinse with water and keep dry.
- Use absorbent disposable towels to wipe away obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with appropriate disinfectant (e.g. 1 in 49 diluted household bleach by mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 49 parts of water for non-metallic surfaces; or 70% alcohol for metallic surfaces), leave for 15-30 minutes and then rinse with water and keep dry.

Toilet and bathroom hygiene

- Keep toilets, changing rooms, and bathrooms clean and hygienic.
- Cleanse toilets frequently (at least once a day) with disinfectant (such as diluted household bleach by mixing 1 part of bleach with 99 parts of water); rinse with water and mop dry before use.
- Provide liquid soap and disposable tissue towels or hand dryers for handwashing.
- Ensure the flushing system of the toilet is in proper function.
- Make sure that the drain pipes are built with U-shaped water traps and do not alter the pipelines without authorisation.
- Pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet regularly (about once a week) so as to maintain the water column in the pipe as water lock to prevent the spread of micro-organisms.
- Make sure that the soil pipes are unobstructed and the sewage drains are functioning properly without leakage so as to avoid breeding of infective agents.
- Never share a common towel.
- Wash non-disposable towels after use and do not re-use them before washing.

Furniture, equipment and toys hygiene

- Rinse floor mop, wiper or other cleaning utensils with water to remove solid or bulky waste if any.
- Disinfect such utensils by immersing them in 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 49 parts of water) for 30 minutes. For metallic surfaces, dry it after washing with 70% alcoholic disinfectants and water. Wash again with detergents and water and dry it before reuse.
- Do not use toys made of absorbent materials e.g. wool.
- Soak towels and linen in 1:99 diluted household bleach for 30 minutes before ordinary washing.
- Do not wash soiled belongings/clothes of children in schools or centres; put them in plastic bags for collection by parents instead. Clean surfaces soiled by vomitus and excreta immediately with diluted household bleach 1:49 (mixing one part of bleach with 49 parts of water).

Make sure that common facilities such as staircases, lifts, lobbies, refuse collection chambers, canopies, ventilation fans and drinking fountains are cleaned, disinfected and maintained regularly.

Prevent pest infestation – proper storage of food, proper disposal of rubbish, be aware of signs of pest infestation and arrange for pest disinfestations where necessary.

When using the toilet, it is essential to observe hygienic practices

- Dispose of used toilet paper in the toilet bowl;
- Before flushing, lower the toilet lid to prevent contaminated water from splashing out;
- Flush the toilet;
- When flushing has stopped, raise the lid;
- Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap. Dry hands with a paper towel or a hand dryer.

Maintain proper function of toilets, drains and pipes

- Clean the floor drain outlets regularly;
- Pour about half a litre of water into each floor drain outlet at least once a week in order to prevent foul air and insects from entering the premises;
- Make sure drains and pipes do not leak or are not blocked. Do not alter them without prior authorization. Repair immediately if there is a defect in the trap or smell of foul air is coming from drain outlets.

Do not spit or litter.

MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS/STAFF MEMBERS SUSPECTED OF HUMAN SWINE INFLUENZA

Schools should keep good records of sick leave of staff and children.

In case of an unusual increase in absentees or having a large number of absentees with symptoms similar to Human Swine Influenza, e.g. fever, lethargy, loss of appetite, coughing, running nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, etc., please contact the absent staff or parents/guardian of sick children to ascertain the reasons for their absence. The Centre for Health Protection should also be notified immediately.

Support/enquiries telephone number of the Centre for Health Protection:

Reporting Communicable Diseases Outbreak to Central Notification Office: 2477 2772 (Fax: 2477 2770)

Central Health Education Unit 24-hour Pre-recorded Hotline: 2833 0111

General Health Enquiries: 2835 1825

Appendix 1

Procedures of Preparing / Using Diluted Bleach

1. Keep windows open when diluting or using bleach to ensure good ventilation.
2. Use protective gear (e.g. gloves and goggles) when diluting or using bleach as it irritates mucous membranes, the skin and the airway.
3. Use cold water for dilution as hot water decomposes the active ingredient of bleach and renders it ineffective.
4. Use measuring jug to measure proper volume of bleach for dilution.
5. After cleansing, soak cleaning tools in diluted bleach for 30 minutes and then rinse them thoroughly before reuse.

Precautions

- Avoid using bleach on metals, wool, nylon, silk, dyed fabric and painted surfaces.
- Avoid bleach from getting into the eyes. If bleach splashes into the eyes, immediately rinse with water for at least 15 minutes and consult a doctor.
- Bleach must not be used together or mixed with other household detergents as this reduces its effectiveness in disinfection and causes chemical reaction.
- As undiluted bleach liberates a toxic gas when exposed to sunlight, it should be stored in a cool and shaded place out of reach of children.
- Sodium hypochlorite decomposes with time. To ensure its effectiveness, it is advisable to purchase recently produced bleach and avoid over-stocking.
- For effective disinfection, diluted bleach should be used within 24 hours after preparation as decomposition increase with time if left unused.

Recommended Use of Household Bleach (5.25% hypochlorite solution)

Dilution ratio	Concentration	Preparation	Usage
1 in 4	10,000 ppm (1%)	One part of household bleach (5.25% hypochlorite solution) in 4 parts of water	For facilities contaminated with blood spillage
1 in 49	1,000 ppm (0.1%)	One part of household bleach (5.25% hypochlorite solution) in 49 parts of water	For surfaces or articles contaminated with vomitus, excreta or secretions
1 in 99	500 ppm (0.05%)	One part of household bleach (5.25% hypochlorite solution) in 99 parts of water	For general environmental cleaning