



# BALLINGER I.S.D.



*"THE TRADITION LIVES ON"*

P.O. Box 231  
802 Conda Ave.  
Ballinger, Texas 76821-0231

Office 325-365-3588  
Fax 325-365-5920

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## Swine Flu Awareness Alert

Dear Parents:

As you have probably heard on the news, there is concern about a swine flu pandemic. At this time there is no reason to panic, but every reason to increase our efforts on prevention. Ballinger ISD is doing everything it can to prevent illness in our community by taking proactive steps, which include education on prevention, daily communication with the Texas Department of Health, extra precautions in the cleanliness of our campus's and more access to hand sanitizers in the classrooms.

On the reverse side of this letter is information about the swine flu. You can find more information at [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com), or you can call 1-888-777-5320. **We ask that you please keep your children home if they have a fever of 99 degrees or more, and if they develop a fever at school you will be asked to pick them up as soon as possible.** Children should not return to school until they are fever free for a minimum of 24 hours, without the aid of medication.

**We encourage you to review good hand washing techniques with your children.**

Please feel free to call me with any questions or concerns, but remember your physician is your best source of information.

Janice Travis, RN

Laura Strube, Superintendent, Ballinger ISD

Swine flu in the U.S.? If you're worried about the flurry of news on pandemics, epidemics, and public health emergencies, here are some key facts provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help you understand how swine flu is spread and what you can do to help prevent infection. Current updates on the spread of swine flu are available at the CDC's Swine Flu Web site. Swine flu is a respiratory disease normally found in pigs and caused by type A influenza viruses. While outbreaks of this type of flu are most common in pigs, human cases of swine flu do happen.

If infected, a person may be able to infect another person one day before symptoms develop; therefore, a person is able to pass the flu on *before* they know they are sick. Infected individuals may spread the virus for seven or more days after becoming sick. Those with swine flu should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are showing symptoms, and up to seven days or longer from the onset of their illness. Children might be contagious for longer periods of time.

#### **What are the symptoms of swine flu?**

Symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of a regular flu: fever and chills, sore throat, cough, headache, body aches, and fatigue. Diarrhea and vomiting can also be present. Without a specific lab test, it is impossible to know whether you may be suffering from swine flu or another flu strain, or a different disease entirely.

#### **What precautionary measures should I take?**

The same everyday precautions that you take to prevent other contagious viruses should be used to protect yourself against swine flu. The best current advice is for individuals to practice good hand hygiene. Periodic hand washing with soap and water, or the use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when hand washing is not possible is a good preventive measure. Also, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as germs can more easily gain entrance into your body through those areas

The CDC recommends avoiding contact with sick people and keeping your own good health in check with adequate sleep, exercise, and a nutritious diet.

#### **IF YOU OR YOUR CHILDREN HAVE FEVER, PLEASE STAY HOME!!!!**

#### **What should you do if you think you are sick with swine flu?**

Contact your health care professional, inform them of your symptoms, and ask whether you should be tested for swine flu. Be prepared to give details on how long you've been feeling ill and about any recent travels. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. If you feel sick, but are not sure what illness you may have, stay home until you have been diagnosed properly to avoid spreading any infection. Remember that the symptoms for swine flu are almost identical to those you might experience with the regular flu. Only your doctor can give you the correct diagnosis.

**Are there medicines effective in treating swine flu in humans?** The current strain of the swine flu appears to respond to the use of oseltamivir (Tamiflu), or zanamivir (Relenza) for those infected. For treatment, these antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within two days of the appearance of symptoms), and for that reason, it's important to notify your health care provider right away if your symptoms are severe.