

SWINE FLU – POSSIBLE PANDEMIC – ARE YOU PREPARED?

Toronto has experienced epidemics and pandemics in the past, and we have fared reasonably well in their management. Even with the mistakes made during the SARS epidemic, Torontonians remained calm under the threat of widespread disease and adapted to deal with the threat.

It is projected by the World Health Organization (WHO) that this fall's flu season may be the worst in many years. Health Canada is echoing the WHO warning. The "Swine Flu" H1N1 virus that spread around the world in the spring 2009 is expected to be revisiting us.

As with any microbiological outbreak of this kind, washing your hands frequently and thoroughly is critical, and the more lather the better, because the bubbles carry away the dirt and microbes. If you have to sneeze, sneeze into the bend of your arm. Prepare as much as you can in the event that your child's school closes or your workplace experiences an outbreak. As they say, an ounce of prevention is like a pound of cure.

TIP:

"The Wiggle" Hand-Washing Technique: Always wash your hands like a surgeon, over and under, wringing them through. When your two hands' fingers are intertwined to their hilts, pivot them together, washing the "pits" of your fingers well; like a shadow-puppet of a bird but with straight open fingers, wiggling vigorously. This will serve to prolong your hand-washing time and to lather more soap deeper into more crevices of your hand. For fun, you can teach your children by telling them to do "The Wiggle". Repeat often, especially when you come home from school or work.

QUESTIONS?

Toronto Public Health: 416.338.7600 (or TTY call 416.392.0658) or www.toronto.ca/health
Ontario Ministry of Health: 1-866801-7242 (or TTY 1-800-387-5559) or
www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic