



## Prevention Against Human Swine Influenza

The outbreak of human swine influenza in Mexico has spread to 9 countries with 148 confirmed cases. On 29 April, the World Health Organisation raised the current level of influenza pandemic alert from phase 4 to 5. In Hong Kong, the Serious Response Level under the Government's Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic is activated.

The symptoms of human swine influenza are usually similar to those of human seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, loss of appetite and coughing. Some people infected with swine flu may also have a runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Human-to-human transmission of swine flu is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu is spread among people, mainly through coughing or sneezing. People may also become infected by touching objects soiled with flu viruses and then touching their nose or mouth. Scout members are advised to adopt the following precautionary measures to reduce the risk of being infected by swine influenza:

- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly. Alcohol-based hand rub is also effective when hands are not visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching mouth, nose or eyes.
- Wash hands with liquid soap promptly if they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, e.g. after sneezing or coughing.
- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Do not spit. Always wrap nasal and mouth discharges with tissue paper, and dispose of the tissue paper properly in a rubbish bin with a lid.
- Wear a mask when respiratory symptoms or fever develop. See a doctor right away.
- Do not go to work or school if you develop influenza-like symptoms.
- If you feel unwell, especially if symptoms of respiratory infection develop, do not attend Group / Unit meetings and activities.

In the course of Group / Unit meetings or activities, Scout leaders concerned should observe the following preventive and contingency measures as far as practicable:

- Avoid visiting crowded or poorly ventilation places when organizing activities.
- Keep sufficient stock of face masks for members who may need one.
- Enhance the hygiene facilities of the Group / Unit headquarters, keep the environment clean and maintain good ventilation.
- If members are found to have symptoms of respiratory infection, leaders should ensure such members wear a face mask and contact their parents as soon as possible for prompt medical treatment. A full list of all attendants for the activity should be kept for subsequent follow up action.

For more health advices on the prevention of influenza, please visit the website of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health ([www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk)).

Patrick YIP  
Chief Scout Executive