Dear Colleagues:

In light of the nationwide swine flu outbreak, as well the media attention and public concern it has caused, Citrus College presents information about swine flu that will enable you to be proactive in caring for yourself and your loved ones. As of today, there have been no cases reported in Los Angeles County.

Administrators and staff are taking all precautions necessary. We have developed a plan to ensure the health and safety of the college community in the event of an outbreak and to provide timely and accurate information. The key to staying healthy is good habits; therefore, we recommend taking the following preventive steps and sharing this information with your students and staff.

- 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 for 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

We are committed to securing your health, safety and well-being and we encourage you to be knowledgeable and proactive. For your convenience, attached is a memo from Shauna Bigby, the college nurse, which provides helpful information about the swine flu virus. In addition, a website, www.citruscollege.edu/notifications, has been established to provide you with updated information and links to federal, state and local health agencies.

Sincerely,

Geraldine M. Perri, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President
Swine Influenza

What is swine flu?
Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by the type A influenza virus. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?
The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How does swine flu spread?
Spread of this swine influenza virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?
First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?
Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).
What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?
Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?
There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- 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 hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?
If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible. Do not go to work or school if ill. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?
Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water, or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner. We recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

What should I do if I get sick?
If you live in areas where swine influenza cases have been identified and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact your healthcare provider.

If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
**How serious is swine flu infection?**
Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe

**Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?**
No. Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Online Resources**

Center for Disease Control [http://www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)

California Department of Public Health [http://ww2.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://ww2.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/default.aspx)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health [http://www.ladhs.org](http://www.ladhs.org)