Swine Flu: What It Means for You—Sensible Reminders amidst Media Hype

We all know popular media serve an important purpose during times of infectious disease outbreaks. Because of important alerts transmitted through news agencies like the Associated Press, the general population is able to quickly absorb important facts about the disease and take appropriate preventative actions. And the media greatly assist health agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to more effectively communicate the message of caution. However, some of the side-effects of a media blitz can be confusion, misinformation, and even panic. In an attempt to "weed through" these potential side-effects of media hype, in this article DOES provides the essentials of what Swine Flu is and what it means to you.

According to the CDC, Swine Flu (a.k.a., H1N1 influenza 2009) is an strain of influenza "referred to as 'Swine Flu' because laboratory testing showed that many of

pigs in North America." Similar to other strains of influenza, H1N1 2009 is
contagious. It is spread mainly from person to person through coughing or
ing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by
ing something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

toms of *include (*but are not limited to*) the following*:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat

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- Body aches
- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

One person's garbage is another person's treasure, so the saying goes. As we all know, however, some trash is potentially dangerous when disposed of improperly. While everyday, commonplace trash such as paper and beverage containers presents few logistic problems for disposal, "sharps," or anything that can puncture a person's body, can present obvious hazards. Moreover, many common chemicals and electrical devices have multiple toxins in them that must be disposed of properly. Here at Case Western Reserve University, there are specific guidelines in place to ensure the appropriate disposal of these potentially dangerous materials. Below are some of the key factors to remember before you decide to dispose of any refuse from your laboratory:

1) There are many items that cannot be

Putting Trash in Its Place: Some Key Reminders for Proper Laboratory Waste Disposal

"All computers and most electronic equipment (lamps, etc.) contain a variety of toxic materials including lead, cadmium, and mercury."

(continued from page 3)...cannulas, coverslips, microscope slides, all pipettes (glass or plastic) and pipette tips, test tubes, glass Petri dishes, and other materials designed for use in biological, etiological, bacteriological, should also not be placed in the soft waste containers.

4) Any item(s) that can puncture the soft waste containers but is not considered a sharp (so-called "pseudosharps") should NOT be placed in the soft waste bags (This includes disposal auto pipette tips).

5) Custodial Services, as well as our two custodial contractors, WILL NOT PICK UP TRASH VIOLATING THESE FIRST TWO RULES. Custodial Services is being told not to touch bags or trash receptacles containing inappropriate trash.

6) In the case that these two rules are violated, the trash will remain at the offending laboratory and the Custodial Supervisor, Protective Services, and DOES will be notified. The problem will then be brought to the attention of the laboratory supervisor.

7) One of our most pressing concerns is the growing amount of electronic waste. All computers and most electronic equipment (lamps, etc.) contain a variety of toxic materials including lead, cadmium, and mercury. A lamp can contain from .06mg or more mercury depending upon its type. Moreover, the average computer may contain up to eight pounds of lead! When possible, recycle all computers. Do not place them with regular trash.

8) Fluorescent Bulbs: All fluorescent bulbs contain a small amount of mercury and lead; therefore, fluorescent bulbs should not be thrown in the ordinary trash. When plant services comes to replace the bulbs, they will pick up the used bulb. If a bulb has already broken, exercise some caution when cleaning it up (use gloves). Place the shards in an air tight container and notify DOES (368-2907). If Plant Services will not accept a lamp, then treat it as a chemical waste and follow chemical waste protocols.

9) Do not throw your trash from home in the dumpsters.

10) Solid waste can be discarded in the standard trash bins, if it is not judged to be "laboratory waste."

If you have any additional questions or concerns about proper waste disposal that are not addressed in this article, please contact DOES directly at x 2906 or visit us in the Service Building on the 1st floor.

Laboratory Safety—Electrical Equipment Safety Reminders

In our daily routines, we sometimes take our electrical equipment and the danger that electricity presents for granted. However, out of sight is not out of mind when it comes to the danger that seemingly "innocuous" electrical equipment can present if we take a lax approach to safety in the laboratory. In order to minimize the possibility of an incident with electrical equipment, please note the following precautions:

a. **ALL** electrical connections should be grounded.

b. Service cords for electrical equipment should be in good condition. Qualified personnel should repair frayed cords or exposed wires.

c. Avoid overloading circuits. Do not use multiple outlet plugs for additional connections.

d. **DO NOT** handle any electrical connections with wet hands or when standing in or near water.

e. **DO NOT** use electric equipment, such as mixers or hot plates, around flammable chemicals.

f. Do not try to repair equipment yourself unless you are qualified and fully understand the repairs required. Qualified personnel should do all repairs.

g. **NEVER** try to bypass any safety device on a piece of electric equipment.

h. In case of a fire on or near any electrical equipment, turn the equipment off if it can be done safely.

Accident prevention must be included in the performance of every task. It cannot be considered a separate entity but is an integral part of everyone's work. Safety is made possible by careful planning of all work based on an understanding of the hazards involved and a knowledge of the work area and safe working procedures. Accident prevention pays in the injuries it prevents, the research time it saves, and the healthy attitude it creates. Please keep these considerations in mind as the pertain to electrical equipment in the laboratory. If you have any questions regarding the safe use of electrical equipment in the lab, consult the DOES Laboratory Safety Manual online at <http://case.edu/finadmin/does/web/Forms/PDFdocs/ChemMan.PDF> or call DOES directly at ext. 2907 for clarification.

Alcohol-based cleaners are for temporary use only until you are able to wash with soap and water.

2. Cover your mouth and nose with your arm as opposed to your hand when you cough or sneeze.

From the Fireplace Hearth to the Laboratory Fume Hood: A Short History and a Few Reminders of Safety and Energy Conservation (con. from page 7)

(continued from page 7) ...containment because they are more vulnerable to traffic in front of the hood, placement of items in the hood, the number of hoods in the room and sash position.

Our annual laboratory inspections suggest that the use of the hoods on campus can be improved by remembering the following “Keepsafes:”

Keep the hood surface free of stored chemicals and paper towels/chemwipes
Keep instruments 2” above the hood surface to allow air flow under the item
Keep work 6” behind the sash and do not let items block sash closure
Keep items from blocking the back baffles
Keep the sash lower than the current certification tag when working in the hood
Keep the sash closed when not working in front of the hood
Keep Safety informed when the hood monitor in is alarm—Call 368-2907 immediately

Following these simple “Keepsafes” will greatly improve fume hood safety and efficiency. If you have any questions on fume hood use in general, please call DOES at 368-2907.

Where is DOES?

If you're new to Case (or simply haven't been to visit us yet), we are located in the Service Building on the 1st floor just off Circle Drive between the Health Sciences Library to the east and the Powerhouse Building to the west. For clarity, call x2906/2907 or check our website (http://does.case.edu.) for an interactive map before your visit. Keep in mind that much of the information and services (e.g., Safety Services manuals and forms, upcoming training sessions, online training sessions, past newsletters, etc.) that DOES provides can be found conveniently online at (http://does.case.edu) at any time.

*Upcoming Training Sessions**

IMPORTANT NOTE: While all laboratories must attend training at DOES, labs must hold specific training in the CHP and ECP as it pertains to the actual work they do. Labs will also need an outline of the CHP and ECP training and a sign in sheet to accompany. Store the sign-in sheet and outline with the CHP and ECP. IT will be asked for during lab inspections.

*Upcoming Training Sessions**

New Hazard Communication (Right-to-Know) Training
Retraining is required annually.
DOES Small Meeting Room - Service Building 1st Floor
PREREGISTRATION IS REQUIRED! - Please call 368-2907

New Radiation Safety Training
Retraining is required annually.
DOES conference room - Service Building 1st Floor
PREREGISTRATION IS *REQUIRED* ! - Please call 368-2906

New Laser Safety Training
Retraining is required annually.
DOES conference room - Service Building 1st Floor
PREREGISTRATION IS *REQUIRED* ! - Please call 368-2906

FOR THE FOLLOWING CLASSES:

Laboratory Safety Retraining
Regulated Chemical Retraining
Hazard Communication (Right-to-Know) Retraining
Bloodborne Pathogen Retraining
Radiation Safety Retraining
Laser Safety Retraining
Respirator Safety Retraining

Please retrain on the Internet at <http://does.case.edu> and click on Training.
Print test and fax or mail it to the DOES office.
If your training is more that one year overdue, then you must attend
the training class in person and cannot retrain online.

FOR THE FOLLOWING CLASSES:

New Laboratory Safety Training
New Regulated Chemical Training (Formaldehyde, Benzene, Methylene Chloride, Vinyl Chloride, etc.)
New Bloodborne Pathogen Training
New Respirator Safety Training
New BSL-3 Safety Training

Retraining is required annually.
DOES Conference Room - Service Building 1st Floor
PREREGISTRATION IS REQUIRED! - Please call 368-2907

***As always, consult our website (http://does.case.edu) for a full schedule of training sessions**

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Please remember that our updated DOES website provides many resources to meet your safety needs. The DOES website (http://does.case.edu/) includes all of the following resources:

- Safety Services Manuals and Forms
- Archived DOES Newsletters