

DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

INFORMATION ON INFLUENZA PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Why is Blackhawk Church concerned with Disease Prevention and Control?

If a strain of influenza starts to circulate that is more deadly than the usual seasonal flu, Blackhawk Church will need to react promptly and aggressively to decrease the spread of that virus. On any given Sunday, there are over 4,000 adult attendees as well as over 300 children between 0-5 years of age plus over 300 Kindergarten through 5th grade children attending Blackhawk. Blackhawk's child population is as large (or larger) than an elementary school, and these children live in a much larger geographic area than a typical elementary school. Therefore, infected individuals who attend Blackhawk can potentially spread their illness to many other children and adults who live in multiple communities in and around Madison. In epidemiologic terms, Blackhawk could become a major **"accelerator"** for the spread of a serious strain of influenza, making the virus spread more rapidly than usual in our area.

What makes certain strains of influenza more serious than usual?

The usual seasonal influenza strains that come around every year are similar enough to each other that people have some pre-existing immunity to them due to their exposure to similar viruses in past seasons. When a strain starts to circulate that is very different from the usual seasonal influenza strains, most individuals do not have any pre-existing immunity, which makes that strain significantly more contagious and severe. Certain strains are inherently more likely to cause severe disease. When a severe strain of influenza circulates increased mortality can occur due to the following:

1. An overactive immune response to the virus
2. Superimposed bacterial infections
3. Conditions that suppress the immune system
4. Chronic medical conditions that make the individual more susceptible to severe disease (including pregnant women, infants and young children)

What are the symptoms of influenza?

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

How is influenza spread?

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person when respiratory droplets from a cough or sneeze of a person infected with influenza move through the air. People may become infected by touching a surface – like a doorknob – with respiratory droplets from an infected person on it and then touching their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface.

What should individuals do to prevent the spread of influenza?

- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze. Use soap and warm water and wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it, and wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you have flu-like symptoms. CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone (your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Leave the house only to get medical care or other necessities. Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick. Avoid normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events and public gatherings. People infected with influenza may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after (or longer depending on your immune system).
- Influenza virus is destroyed by heat (167-212 °F [75-100 °C]). In addition, several chemical germicides, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), and alcohols are effective against human influenza viruses if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time.

BLACKHAWK CHURCH'S PLAN FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Blackhawk Church will utilize levels of potential action steps in responding to any outbreak of disease. Action levels will be determined by referencing the Public Health Department, Centers for Disease Control and the operation of local schools and the state.

Standard Operating Level

- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer throughout the building (Children's Ministries check-in kiosks, Info Center, Registration Desk, Reception, etc.)
- Maintain a consistent level of supplies (soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, tissues, cleaning supplies, non-sterile gloves, etc.) and wastebaskets
- Move or change hand washing signs in bathrooms and kitchens occasionally so that people notice them
- Post signs in Children's Ministry reminding parents not to bring sick children
- Stock non-latex gloves in Children's Ministry and the First Aid Room
- Stock N95 masks in Early Childhood Ministry
- Send seasonal communication regarding disease control and prevention through ministries
- Post/update information on disease prevention and control on the website
- Educate staff on influenza (e.g. staff meeting, email, etc.)
 - Get both seasonal and specific flu strain vaccines (if available)
 - Stay home if they develop flu symptoms
 - Send sick people home from ministry activities
 - Prepare to carry out essential functions if people are sick and must stay home
 - Train others on basic functions in event they must stay home
 - Obtain terminal services (if needed)
- Educate volunteers on influenza (e.g. annual kick-off, ministry communications, etc.)
 - Advise volunteers to get both seasonal and specific flu strain vaccines (if available) (especially Children's Ministries and Student Ministries)
 - Advise volunteers to stay home if they have flu symptoms
 - Give volunteers authority and responsibility to send sick people home from ministry events
 - Notify volunteers that ministry programs may be changed or cancelled

Further Potential Action Steps

Level 1 Options

- Educate attendees about disease prevention and control; remind them to stay home if they have flu symptoms (e.g. bulletin, *Life@Blackhawk*, etc.)
- Encourage flexibility in choosing to receive communion
- Encourage flexibility in choosing to shake hands
- Remove high-risk individuals from high-risk volunteer positions (e.g. pregnant women in Children's Ministries)
- Instruct volunteers caring for infants and toddlers to wear gloves when handling secretions (e.g. wiping noses and mouths)
- Hang additional signs concerning disease prevention and control
- Order extra supplies (N95 masks, gloves, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, tissues)
- Increase availability of hand sanitizer and tissues throughout the building
- Clean/disinfect doors and other common surfaces during or between Sunday services
- Clean/disinfect Children's Ministries rooms between Sunday services

Level 2 Options

- Educate attendees about disease prevention and control; remind them to stay home if they (or members of their household) have flu symptoms (e.g. Sunday services from the platform)
- Require mandatory use of hand sanitizer for anyone entering Children's Ministries
- Consider having Early Childhood Ministry workers wear N95 masks
- Consider taking the temperature of all children entering Early Childhood Ministry and not admitting those with a fever
- Close use of the kitchen (including coffee on Sundays)
- Close water fountains
- Cancel communion
- Stop reusing bulletins for multiple services

Level 3 Options

Depending on the situation, the following options will be considered to varying degrees and at different times with closing the office being a last course of action in an extreme situation.

- Cancel Children's Ministries (ask parents to not bring children to church)
- Cancel Sunday services and Sunday events
- Cancel non-Sunday ministry events
- Cancel rental engagements (gym use, parties, etc.)
- Close the office