

Influenza

is on many people's minds now. It is essential that members of the Cornell community have a shared understanding of the educational, preventative, and treatment strategies at work at Cornell.

As concerns have arisen around the safety of using food utensils in Cornell Dining Rooms, here are a few helpful reminders:

Two important ways to reduce the chance of contracting 2009 H1N1 flu virus are appropriate hand washing and avoidance of touching the mouth, nose, or eyes.

Wash your hands often. By washing your hands, you limit contaminating the utensils other people will use.

Before serving yourself, please either **wash your hands with soap and water or use the hand sanitizers located throughout the Cornell Dining Rooms.**

After you finish selecting your food items and proceed to the tables, you should use the hand sanitizers available before eating.



If you need to cough or sneeze while waiting in line, please take a few steps back and sneeze or cough into the elbow area of your arm.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q: Can people get 2009 H1N1 flu virus by eating food products?

Influenza viruses are not known to be spread by eating food items.

Q: Could a sick restaurant worker transmit 2009 H1N1 flu virus to consumers in a restaurant or other food-

Q: Should individuals or restaurants alter cooking methods to decrease the risk of 2009 H1N1 flu virus?

It is not necessary to alter cooking times or temperatures for any food products in order to reduce chances of contracting 2009 H1N1 flu virus, because eating food is not a known method of transmission of influenza viruses.

service venue?

Transmission of the virus in a restaurant could occur through the normal routes of infection that could happen in any public or private setting— inhalation of the respiratory droplets expelled by infected individuals when coughing or sneezing, and, by touching any surface that is contaminated with the virus and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

Influenza is not known to be spread through consumption of a food item. However, in accordance with long-standing FDA recommendations, food workers experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness should not work with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens or unwrapped single-service or single-use articles.

In addition, the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov) recommends that individuals experiencing symptoms of 2009 H1N1 flu virus stay home from work.

Cornell Dining and Cornell Catering adhere to food safety and sanitation practices that are consistent with the CDC's guidelines for higher education institutions, as well as guidelines from the Tompkins County Health Department. If CDC or Health Department recommendations change on how to prepare and serve food, Cornell Dining and Cornell Catering will respond accordingly.

Hand sanitizers are provided in all Cornell Dining Rooms at several locations, near serving and seating areas. Serving utensils are sanitized frequently during meal

<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm153285.htm>

Q: Is there a risk from drinking water?

Tap water that has been treated by conventional disinfection processes does not likely pose a risk for transmission of influenza viruses. Current drinking water treatment regulations provide a high degree of protection from viruses. No research has been completed on the susceptibility of 2009 H1N1 flu virus to conventional drinking water treatment processes. However, recent studies have demonstrated that free chlorine levels typically used in drinking water treatment are adequate to inactivate highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza. It is likely that other influenza viruses such as 2009 H1N1 would also be similarly inactivated by chlorination. To date, there have been no documented human cases of influenza caused by exposure to influenza-contaminated drinking water.

<http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/qa.htm>

Q: How should linens, eating utensils and dishes of persons infected with influenza virus be handled?

Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first. Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with hot water and soap.

periods. Single-use bakery tissues are provided near cookie trays, bread and roll baskets, and other appropriate self-serve areas as an alternative to tongs for those who wish to use them. Sneeze guards are in place in serving areas. Staff are encouraged to remind our customers that they should wash their hands frequently and use the hand sanitizers provided as often as possible. Staff members are also expected to wash their hands repeatedly throughout their shifts and use/change gloves regularly.

Training and education is provided to Cornell Dining staff at regular intervals which include managers and staff members who are required to pass a food safety course. are educated This training emphasizes the importance of exceptional personal hygiene and staying away from work when sick.

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/faq/swineflu/sf028.html>

Q: How should I plan for a catered event I'm hosting in the near future?

When you have determined that your event should go forward as planned with Cornell Catering or Green Gourmet for food service, we include hand sanitizers in individual packets and single-use bakery tissues. For the time being, we've eliminated large self-serve bowls of items like pretzels and chips. Cornell Catering staff will work with you to find appropriate alternatives.

When using outside vendors, be sure to check that they are following the guidelines as listed above.