

# Strengthening Your Mind and Body Against the Human Swine Flu

The Human Swine Flu (Influenza A H1N1) is still affecting many countries and new cases are being reported everyday. The outbreak of an Influenza Pandemic has also become a major threat to Hong Kong and other parts of the world. As the SARS epidemic remains fresh in our memories, it is only natural for many of us to feel anxious and concerned in the face of this infectious disease.

In accordance with the development of the Human Swine Flu, our University's Committee on Health Promotion and Protection (CHPP) has already activated the Emergency Response Level to alert staff and students to the importance of taking various precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease particularly within our campus. Our Service would also like to remind students to safeguard their own health and well-being by paying attention to the following:

- 1. Stay healthy** - boost up your bodily resistance by maintaining a healthy lifestyle: get enough rest, exercise regularly, follow a balanced diet, attend to your personal hygiene;
- 2. Take precautions** - follow the advice of public health officials and experts in taking all necessary precautionary measures, e.g. hand washing, wearing face mask when necessary, paying special attention when travelling abroad or participating in mass programmes;
- 3. Alter your lifestyle** - adjust or alter your daily routines, social and recreational activities to adapt to the current situation, avoid going to crowded or enclosed places and pursue outdoor activities instead;
- 4. Increase your self-awareness** - attend to your health condition and seek medical care promptly when you feel unwell or present symptoms of infection;
- 5. Think rationally** - beware of irrational thoughts and fears; analyze the situation in an objective and rational manner, one's mental and emotional state can affect personal health as well as resistance against illness and crisis;

**6. Stay informed** - The Human Swine Flu has a pervasive impact on our medical service, daily life, economy, etc.; it is important to keep up-to-date with the latest news and developments through the media; however, it is inadvisable to spend too much time reading, watching, or discussing related news and rumors as it may heighten your anxiety;

**7. Balance your perspectives** - avoid being preoccupied with bad news and negative thoughts; attend to other positive aspects of the situation as well; focus on useful information such as the most effective preventive measures; believing that you can confront the crisis in a positive and constructive manner can help reduce your anxiety and helplessness;

**8. Learn to relax** - engage in activities that give you pleasure and which are good for your mental and physical well-being, such as listening to your favourite music, watching an entertaining video, sending MSN to friends, or taking walks round our lovely campus and enjoying the fresh air;

**9. Divert your attention** - being preoccupied with the disease can be a major source of distress; try to divert your attention and energy to other worthwhile projects or pleasurable activities;

**10. Share your feelings** - do not suppress your emotions; it is good to talk to your friends and family about your worries as well as express your care and concern for them.

To battle the Human Swine Flu, every one of us should stay alert, observe the guidelines issued by the Government and CHPP as well as adopt the above measures to avoid being infected. This will prevent the spread of the disease and ensure that we can all stay healthy and safe.

**Student Counselling and Development Service**

**Office of Student Affairs**