

Swine Flu - Protecting Your Employees

As the warnings of yet more cases of the swine flu virus are announced, employers are advised to encourage employees to follow the advice issued by the Health Protection Agency and consider other ways to ensure that employees remain protected against the virus as far as possible, with the minimum of disruption to their business.

Below is a summary of the steps that are recommended:

Be aware of the typical symptoms of the virus which include fever, fatigue, lack of appetite, coughing and sore throat.

- Monitor official travel guidance with the World Health Organisation (WHO)
http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/frequently_asked_questions/travel/en/index.html
- Avoid business travel to affected areas, where possible.
- Discourage staff from taking holidays in affected areas and require them to notify you as employer where travel is undertaken to specific areas.
- Adhere to advice regarding travel arrangements (including medication, insurance etc) where travel is necessary.
- Ensure that anyone who has recently travelled to the affected areas and is experiencing influenza-like symptoms should stay at home and limit their contact with others. They should also seek medical advice from their GP or by contacting NHS direct. Consider if the employee can work from home during this period and how this will be managed.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, use a tissue, dispose of the tissue immediately, then wash hands as soon as possible.
- Maintain good personal hygiene, including washing hands regularly with soap and water.
- Clean hard surfaces, including doors and door handles, key boards, telephone handsets, desks etc. with normal cleaning products.

Employers may also wish to consider using a Questions and Answers format providing advice and guidance which is available to all staff via the intranet or a shared drive.

If you would like to discuss the steps referred to or have a particular query on this topic, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please visit our website www.advantagehr.gg or call 01481 730737 or 07781 138280.