



## Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces to Help Prevent the Spread of Novel H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Virus

Like other flu viruses, novel H1N1 flu spreads from an ill person to others **mainly** through coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or rubbing their eyes. To prevent the spread of influenza, it is **most** important to:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
- **Cover your cough or sneeze** with the crook of your elbow or a tissue.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze. If water is not nearby, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs often spread this way.

The influenza virus survives on surfaces for 2–8 hours, depending on environmental factors such as temperature and the type of surface. By the time students and staff come to the school in the morning, influenza virus on surfaces from the day before would no longer be infectious. In light of this fact, it does not make sense to close a school for the purpose of cleaning when influenza cases are detected among staff and students. Instead, schools should continue to clean and disinfect the school buildings according to the regularly followed schedule. Routinely used disinfectants are effective in inactivating the virus.

**For more information on novel H1N1 flu, visit the Department of Public Health's Web site at <http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch>.**