



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE COMING FLU SEASON

8/27/09

(Following the Governor's H1N1 Preparedness Summit – 8/21/09)



This year's flu season promises to be very different than in years past.

Health officials are predicting schools and businesses may see absentee rates of 20 to 40 percent due to a re-emergence of the new strain of H1N1 influenza that appeared last spring. People will either be sick themselves OR they will be staying home to take care of someone else that's sick.

Of particular concern with this H1N1 flu is that we are seeing more complications, hospitalizations, and deaths in a much younger age group than we see with the typical seasonal flu. Those with the highest risk of developing complications from the H1N1 flu are children and young adults up to age 24, pregnant women and those with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

No one likes having the flu -- that's reason enough to be careful. But a flu epidemic also would cause major disruptions to our schools, local businesses, the economy and our community. Each of us must make it our personal responsibility to reduce our risk of getting the flu and to prevent the spread of the flu virus to others!

WHAT EVERY PERSON CAN DO:

- ✓ Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve, when you cough or sneeze and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- ✓ Stay home if you're sick!



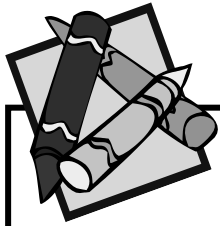
SIGNS YOU MAY BE SICK WITH THE FLU:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Possibly diarrhea and vomiting



If you get the flu, you should not return to school or work until at least 24 hours after your fever of 100 degrees or higher is gone without taking fever-reducing medicine!

Flip for more ways to fight the flu



TEACHERS & SUPPORT STAFF

- Teach proper hand washing procedures and build in enough time for students to use them.
- Set a good example by washing your own hands often during the day.
- Make sure students dispose of tissues properly after coughing or sneezing. You might attach small paper bags to each desk as a personal waste container.
- Encourage students to use only their personal school supplies (pencils, crayons, scissors, etc.) to reduce the spread of germs.
- Keep your eyes open for students who may be sick and send them to the office or school nurse for further evaluation.
- Prepare extra lesson plans in advance for substitutes in case you become ill.
- Develop homework packets for students who may have to stay home several days while sick.
- If you have children, plan ahead for child care if they get sick or their school is closed.
- Consider ways to increase social distancing in your classroom.

CUSTODIANS

- Wash your hands frequently throughout every shift.
- Continue to use typical cleaning protocol. When possible, make an extra effort to wipe down frequently used surfaces.
- Make sure extra supplies of soap, paper towels, etc. are available.



So-cial dis-tanc-ing: to increase the distance between people beyond the “danger zone” of germ transmission (about 3 feet) by . . .

- moving students’ desks farther apart to allow more space between students. Consider arranging classroom to reduce face-to-face contact between students.
- avoiding activities/games in which children touch each other
- limiting physical contact when greeting other people (i.e. handshakes, hugs, etc.)
- not using other people’s personal items; i.e. hats, hairbrushes, lipsticks, water bottles, etc.

PRINCIPALS/OFFICE STAFF

- Post district-provided flu prevention posters throughout your school.
- Don’t allow sick staff or students to stay at school.
- Identify and staff an isolation area where students with flu symptoms will wait until they are sent home.
- Provide protective masks and gloves for staff dealing with sick students and for the ill students as well.
- Consider ways to increase social distancing.
- Clean shared surfaces such as computer keyboards or phones with an alcohol-based disposable wipe before using.
- Develop a plan to cover key staff positions – including yours -- if staff must stay home because of illness.
- Watch for updates and additional information from the district office that should be shared with staff and families at your school.

