

Department of Health & Human Services

August 2009

Dear Parent:

There are two types of influenza (flu) to be concerned about this year. The first type is the seasonal flu that occurs every fall and winter. The second type is the novel H1N1 flu (swine flu) virus that began last spring. The novel H1N1 flu has caused mild to severe illness and hospitalizations in both adults and children. Because children do not have immunity to this virus, they have been most affected and are considered at high risk of infection.

There are many things we can do to keep our schools open and functioning in a normal manner this school year. We need your help to do this. Get your child and yourself vaccinated against both seasonal and novel H1N1 flu. Vaccination is an important way to protect your child and family from both types of influenza. There will be 2 different flu vaccines this fall. It is important to make sure children get both kinds. Seasonal flu vaccine is available now and novel H1N1 flu vaccine will be offered later this fall. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends both vaccines for all children 6 months through 18 years of age. Parents and other family members can be vaccinated, too. The more people who get vaccinated with both seasonal and novel H1N1 flu vaccine, the better chance we have of keeping the viruses from moving from child to child in our schools and spreading them to your family.

If you suspect your child is getting or has the flu, it is important they do not attend school or go anywhere else—such as group childcare, the mall, or sporting events—where other people would be exposed to flu germs. Both types of flu viruses spread easily. If your child is sick, keep them home for at least 24 hours after they are free of fever, without fever reducing medication.

Teach your child how to reduce their risk of getting and spreading flu viruses by:

- Washing their hands often. Wash with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds.
- Using hand sanitizer. Gels and rubs with at least 60% alcohol are effective.
- Coughing or sneezing into their sleeve or elbow—not their hands!
- Not touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread that way.

CDC is not recommending school closure if the flu continues to cause mild disease, but school closures may still be warranted in the event of overwhelming absenteeism. School leaders, along with the Oakland County Health Division, are closely monitoring the situation and will inform parents as soon as possible if school closures will occur. Plan ahead now by having a family discussion to decide who would care for your child if his/her school were closed. If school is closed, students should not gather at another location, but rather stay home to avoid continued spread of flu outside of school.

Get the most up-to-date information from Oakland County Health Division www.oakgov.com/health.

Department of Health and Human Services
OAKLAND COUNTY HEALTH DIVISION



Kathy Forzley, RS, MPA
Manager/Health Officer