

Straight Answers for Parents about the Flu in Schools

From Your Local Health Department and the Northeast Health District



Q: What is “Swine Flu”?

A: The Novel H1N1 flu, or “Swine Flu,” is simply another kind of flu. It is no more powerful than the seasonal flu we see every year. Its symptoms are the same and it spreads between people in the same way. The treatment is also the same. Infections don’t seem to be as serious as the seasonal flu, but people with underlying health conditions are more likely to have problems.

Q: How common is Novel H1N1?

A: Most of the flu-like illnesses occurring right now are probably H1N1 flu. Because H1N1 is a mild flu with the same symptoms and treatment as seasonal flu, knowing which type of flu caused your illness is not important. If you have H1N1 you simply have the flu and should stay at home to prevent spreading it to others.

Q: What are the symptoms of the flu?

A: Both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu have the same symptoms. The symptoms include fever (over 100°F or 37.8°C), sore throat, muscle aches, cough, runny nose, and extreme fatigue. Vomiting and diarrhea occur in a small number of cases.

For more information:

Health Dept: www.PublicHealthisforEveryone.com

CDC: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents

GA Dept of Education: www.doe.k12.ga.us

STAY HOME!

Q: Is my child likely to catch the flu at school?

A: Your child's school will work to keep the school clean to prevent the spread of the flu virus. If your child uses proper hand washing procedure before touching his/her eyes, nose or mouth, or before eating, it will reduce the chances that your child will catch the flu from being at school.

Q: How do I care for the flu?

A: The flu can be cared for at home without the help of a medical professional. People with the flu should get plenty of caffeine-free fluids to avoid dehydration, take only non-aspirin pain relievers to reduce fever, and get plenty of rest. Call your healthcare provider if you are unsure about whether your child should go to the doctor.

Q: How long should my child stay home from school?

A: The CDC currently recommends that people with the flu stay home from school or work for 24 hours after fever-reducing medication has been stopped. Sometimes this can be hard to pin down. If other symptoms continue, children should stay home longer than 24 hours after the fever has gone away.

Q: When does my child need to go to the doctor?

A: In the unusual event that someone with the flu has any of the following problems, you should call your doctor or seek other professional medical help:

- Fast breathing or troubled breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever of 102°F

GET A FLU SHOT!

Q: Does my child need a flu shot?

A: You should take your child to get vaccinated against both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu. Vaccination is the best way to prevent widespread flu. Vaccinations for the seasonal flu will be available beginning August 31, 2009 at your county health department for a modest cost. Vaccinations for the H1N1 flu will be available starting in October.

Q: Are there side effects to the flu vaccine?

A: Most side effects are minor. Possible side effects include soreness, redness or swelling at the site where the flu shot is given, and a low grade fever or aches that last 1 to 2 days. Complications associated with catching the flu are much greater than the risks associated with the vaccine. You cannot get the flu from being vaccinated.

