



111 North County Farm Road, Wheaton, Illinois 60187
(630) 682-7400
www.dupagehealth.org

October 20, 2009

Dear DuPage County School and Child Care Center Parents, Students, and Staff:

As influenza activity increases during this unique influenza season, the DuPage County Health Department is encouraging increased awareness and actions to help control and prevent the spread of influenza, toward keeping our students and community safe and healthy. 2009 H1N1 (swine) influenza virus activity has been confirmed nationally as well as locally since April 2009, and has been causing outbreaks in schools and other learning facilities since this school year began. Continued circulation of 2009 H1N1 influenza virus is expected this fall and winter.

Persons experiencing signs of severe illness (such as difficulty breathing, dehydration, irritability, confusion, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen) should seek medical attention immediately, and persons with underlying conditions, including pregnant women, should promptly contact their physician if they develop influenza-like illness.

Since influenza is primarily spread by direct contact with nose and throat secretions, there are measures we can all take to reduce our chances of becoming sick with influenza:

- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. For medical questions or concerns, contact your physician.
- **Early treatment of high-risk students and staff:** People at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should speak with their physician as soon as possible. Early treatment with antiviral medications is very important for people at high risk because it can prevent hospitalizations and deaths. People at high risk include those who are pregnant, young children, persons \geq 65 years, persons of any age who have certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, neuromuscular disease), or have compromised immune systems.
- **Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often** with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever** (without the use of fever-reducing medications). This will help reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw it away after use.
- **Do not share eating utensils or drinking containers.** Persons should not share straws, cups, glasses, water bottles used during sports or recreation, cigarettes, etc.
- **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu as vaccines are available.

The DuPage County Health Department will continue to collaborate with school officials and the DuPage Regional Office of Education toward closely monitoring disease activity, severity, and scope, in order to provide current recommendations in accordance with Illinois Department of Public Health and CDC guidance. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available, toward reducing the impact of influenza in our schools and community. For more influenza information and updates, please visit www.protectdupage.org, www.ready.illinois.gov/, www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/, or www.flu.gov. For general information, call the H1N1 Hotline at 630-221-7600.

Sincerely,

THE DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Rashmi Chugh, M.D., M.P.H.
Medical Officer

Maureen McHugh
Executive Director

Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday

In an emergency go to www.protectdupage.org and tune into WDCB 90.9 fm radio.