



County of Yolo

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Joseph P. Iser, MD, DrPH, MSc
Director – Health Officer

137 N. Cottonwood Street, Suite 2100, Woodland, CA 95695
PHONE - (530) 666-8550 FAX - (530) 666-7337

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TO: Parents of school-aged children

RE: Novel H1N1 Influenza

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in our schools. We want to keep the schools open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season and **we need your help.**

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or a 60% alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food, or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Coughs or sneezes can be covered using the elbow, arm, or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100°F/37.8°C or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Keep sick children at home** until at least 24 hours *after* there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school *will be sent home.*

As parents of school-aged children, you must be prepared for when your child gets sick with the flu. This includes preparing an action plan for when your child needs to be kept at home if he or she is sick.

Action steps for parents if children are sick and must stay home

- Be prepared to support home learning activities if the school makes them available. Your child's school may offer web-based lessons, instructional phone calls, and other types of distance learning. Have school materials, such as text books, workbooks, and homework packets available at home.
- Have activities for your children to do while at home. Pull together games, books, DVDs, and other items to keep your family entertained.

- Find out if your employer will allow you to stay at home to care for sick children. Ask if you can work from home. If this is not possible, find other ways to care for your children at home. **Do not** arrange for childcare or “study sessions” that would involve your child interacting with children from a different household.

Tips for taking care of children (and other household members) with the flu

- **Stay home if you or your child is sick** until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others. Stay home even if taking antiviral medicines.
- **Make sure sick household members get plenty of rest and drink clear fluids** (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- **Monitor them for warning signs that the illness is getting worse.** If you observe any of the following warning signs, call their doctor immediately:

Warning signs in children:

- Fast breathing or trouble 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 that improve but then return with fever and a worse cough

Warning signs in adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and a worse cough

- **Check with your doctor about any special care** needed for household members who may be at higher risk for complications from flu. This includes children under the age of 5 years, pregnant women, people of any age who have chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), and people age 65 years and older.
- **Ask your doctor about antiviral medicines or fever-reducing medicines** for sick household members. Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers; it can cause a rare, but serious illness called Reye’s syndrome

For more information visit: www.yolocounty.org

Hot Lines:

California Department of Public Health: 1-888-865-0564

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 1-800-232-4636