

Adair County School District
1204 Greensburg Street
Columbia, KY 42728
(270) 384-2476

September 2, 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

You may have noticed information in the news recently related to the H1N1 (Swine Flu). Influenza is a contagious disease thought by medical professionals to be spread from person to person through respiratory droplets passed by coughing and sneezing. At the present time, with the information known, symptoms of H1N1 influenza should be treated the same as seasonal influenza. Although no cases of the H1N1 virus have been reported in the Adair County school population, the virus has been reported in several schools in Kentucky.

The Adair County School District is following guidelines of the Adair County Health Department and is monitoring and taking preventative measures to prevent the onset and spread of the H1N1 (swine flu) virus as well as other illnesses.

To prevent widespread influenza in the schools, we recommend that your child stay home from school if experiencing flu or cold symptoms. People with influenza-like illnesses can shed the virus and be contagious for more than 24 hours after their fever goes away. **Definitely keep your child at home for treatment and observation if he or she has any of these symptoms:**

- fever (greater than 100 degrees by mouth; your child should remain at home for at least 24 hours after he or she is free of fever or feverishness without the use of fever-reducing medications)
- mild stomach ache
- vomiting (even once)
- diarrhea
- chills
- general tiredness or feelings of fatigue, discomfort, weakness or muscle aches
- headache
- frequent congested (wet) or croupy, dry cough
- lots of nasal congestion with frequent blowing of nose
- sore throat
- trouble breathing

If your child has any of the above symptoms, you should talk to your health care provider by telephone to determine whether testing or treatment is needed.

To help prevent the spread of influenza, teach your family good hygiene habits:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds (the length of the "Happy Birthday" song twice) especially after coughing or sneezing. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not accessible (Use 1/2 teaspoon or nickel-size equivalent. Parents may purchase travel-size hand sanitizer for students to bring to school.)
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands. Discard tissues immediately after each use and then wash hands.
- **Do not** touch eyes, nose or mouth.
- **Regularly clean surfaces and items** that have frequent hand contact. It is not necessary to disinfect beyond routine cleaning.
- **Do not** share eating utensils, drink from the same cup or share toothbrushes.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.

- **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.
- **The H1N1 (swine) flu vaccine** is still under development but is expected to be available by mid-October.

Influenza is most contagious during the first 48 hours. A child should remain home for at least 24 hours after he or she is free of fever or feverishness without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Often, when a child awakens with vague complaints (the way colds and flu begin), it is wise to observe your child at home for an hour or two before deciding whether or not he/she should go to school. Keeping a sick child at home will help minimize the spread of infections and viruses in the classroom. You also should limit other siblings of all ages from further contact with the child who has the prescribed symptoms. Limiting attendance to other social gatherings (outside of school) also will be helpful in decreasing risk of exposure to the virus. Contact your health care provider for advice on your child's condition.

If your child has the signs and symptoms mentioned previously, please call the school office attendance staff and inform them of your child's illness. This information will help in working with the local health department to identify and assist families with resources for possible cases of influenza and will also help staff put additional safeguards in place to prevent the spread of illness.

As any other school and community illness it is important that we work together to prevent and reduce the onset and spread of the swine flu virus. We look forward to continual communication and support as we work through this new challenge. For more H1N1 (swine) flu information visit: <http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu>, <http://healthalerts.ky.gov>, or www.flu.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. Website links are also available on the Adair County District website at: <http://www.adair.k12.ky.us/>.

If you have further questions, please contact the Adair County Health Department at 384-2286.

Sincerely,

Brenda Mann
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Adair County Schools