

The **Union City School District** would like to update you with the new information being released from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) regarding Influenza-like illness (ILI) and the novel influenza A virus A/H1N1. There are everyday steps you can do to keep yourself, your family, and our community healthy.

### **Symptoms of H1N1**

The H1N1 virus causes a respiratory illness with symptoms that are similar to that of the seasonal flu, and therefore it is difficult to tell them apart. Symptoms that suggest possible H1N1 infection include fever higher than 100 °F and either a cough or sore throat. Illness may be accompanied by other symptoms including headache, tiredness, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, diarrhea, and vomiting. Like seasonal flu, illness from H1N1 can vary from mild to severe.

### **How it is Spread**

The main way that colds and flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. This is called "droplet spread." This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. Some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

### **When to Stay Home**

Students and staff members who are sick should not come to school. People who have symptoms of an influenza-like illness (ILI) (fever plus at least cough or sore throat and possibly other symptoms like runny nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea) should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel, for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine). This recommendation should be adhered to whether or not the sick individual received treatment with antiviral drugs. Since the usual duration of fever is 2-4 days, this will allow most individuals to return to school after a period of 3-5 days of exclusion.

### **The School Plan**

Any student or staff member with influenza like symptoms will be referred to the school nurse for evaluation. They will be promptly separated from other students and staff, asked to wear a face mask, and will be sent home as soon as possible. The student will also be evaluated by the school nurse when they return to school to make sure they are no longer ill with fever and are well enough to attend class.

The school will monitor absenteeism and determine if student and staff absence is due to illness. The decision to dismiss a school would be made only in consultation with the local Department of Health and would not likely have a significant effect on community wide transmission. Instead, it would be used as a strategy to protect the students and staff

that are at a high risk of severe illness and death if they got the H1N virus.

In compliance with the CDC guidelines, the school will regularly clean all areas and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact. “Additional or special environmental control measures and special cleaners are not necessary.”

### **Protect Yourself, Protect your Family**

Below are everyday actions you and your family can take to stay healthy:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective if a sink is not available.
2. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it, and then wash your hands.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
4. Avoid close contact (within about 6 feet) with sick people.
5. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.
6. If you do get sick, the CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
7. If you have symptoms, seek treatment early.

Influenza antiviral medications are an important tool for the treatment and prevention of influenza, including novel H1N1. If you or anyone in your family has symptoms you should contact your physician for guidance.

For additional information on H1N1 and how to care for an individual with influenza like symptoms go to:

PADOH Public Web Site, H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

<http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?q=252990>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>