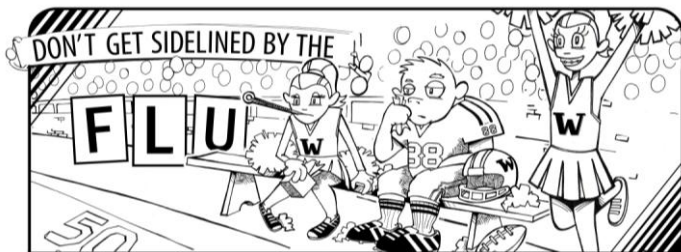


H1N1 (SWINE) FLU: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

With reports of H1N1 (swine) flu in our area, it is important that we work together to keep our children and school healthy. By keeping our children flu-free, we benefit the community as a whole. Following are answers to frequently asked questions about the H1N1 flu and how to help protect your child.



WHAT IS H1N1 (SWINE) FLU?

- H1N1 Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that cause regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. The Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

HOW DOES H1N1 (SWINE) FLU SPREAD?

- H1N1 flu spreads in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Seasonal flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON SYMPTOMS OF H1N1 (SWINE) FLU?

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu. Often we get confused about the symptoms of the flu and how they are different from a common cold. Knowing the symptoms is important and will help you act quickly to get your child feeling better faster.

- **Common symptoms of both H1N1 and seasonal flu include: fever, cough, sore throat,** headache, muscle and body aches, chills and fatigue.
 - In addition, some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 flu.
- Symptoms of a common cold include: stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat and hacking cough.

SIMPLE STEPS FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD HEALTHY

- There is no vaccine available right now to protect against H1N1 flu, but there are some everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
 - Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, and dispose of the tissue in a proper trash receptacle after use.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
 - If you become ill with influenza, or any other respiratory illness, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- If someone in your household gets symptoms of the flu, contact your health care provider. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing is needed or treatment is needed.

DON'T TAKE THE FLU LYING DOWN

- If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, call your doctor early. Call your doctor immediately if your child has a chronic disease. Some children may benefit from an antiviral medication, which can be prescribed by a physician and can help lessen the duration of the virus and reduce the risk of complications, such as pneumonia.
 - To be effective, antiviral medication should be taken within 12-48 hours after flu symptoms begin
- If your child has seasonal or H1N1 flu, it is important for them to stay home from school, rest, and drink plenty of fluids.
- Additionally, notify the school nurse if your child has flu symptoms or a diagnosis of flu or H1N1 flu. Monitoring flu incidence will help keep students, faculty and our community healthy.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE H1N1 (SWINE) INFLUENZA VIRUS, VISIT WWW.CDC.GOV/H1N1FLU

Resources: www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu and www.nasn.org/default.aspx?tabid=316