

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS on H1N1 or Swine Flu**

### **How is “Swine Flu” being diagnosed?**

Swine Flu (H1N1) is currently being diagnosed with the Influenza test for Influenza A. If the test is positive, the patient is said to have a “presumed” case of H1N1.

### **What are the symptoms of H1N1?**

Symptoms for H1N1 flu are similar to seasonal flu and include: fever greater than 100 degrees F, sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills, headache and body aches, fatigue, and possibly vomiting and diarrhea. Vomiting and diarrhea are somewhat unique to H1N1.

### **Has Douglas County School District had any reported cases of H1N1?**

DCSD has had some reported cases of “presumed” H1N1. As the school year proceeds, we anticipate seeing more cases.

### **Will there be a letter sent home for every case of H1N1 in every school?**

As there will probably be many cases of H1N1 seen among school children, we will not send individual letters. Parents/guardians should be aware that as this flu season approaches we will see more and more cases. Students will be exposed at the grocery store, movie theatre and other places where people gather. The good news is that at this point, the virus remains mild compared to seasonal flu, and the duration seems to be quite short in most cases.

### **Who is monitoring the flu cases in Douglas County School District?**

Monitoring is being done by DCSD Health Services in conjunction with the Communications Department. DCSD will be doing official surveillance at the direction of Tri-County Health department, and at this time we are doing our own surveillance through our district nurses. Health Services is in regular communication with Tri-County Health Department (our local health department), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Your School Nurse Consultant will confirm any and all reported cases of H1N1, by communicating with the parent/guardian to ensure that an influenza test has occurred. School Nurse Consultants follow the process set down by Tri-County Health and the State Health Department for reportable communicable disease.

### **What is the school district doing to ensure my child is safe at school?**

School District personnel are given the latest information through the communication system that is currently in place. We are following the guidelines that come down from CDC concerning prevention. School nurses are educating the students with posters and other means of communication on the following points:

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol based hand cleaners are also effective and recommended.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading the virus to others.

### **As a parent/guardian, what can I do to help control the spread of H1N1?**

Monitor your student for flu symptoms. If any symptoms appear, have your student remain at home until a determination can be made as to the severity of their illness. Do not send your student to school or other activities, programs or school events. This will help limit the spread of disease. Your student will be sent home if they come to school with any symptoms consistent with the flu. In the event you cannot miss work while your child is ill, please make arrangements ahead of time for day care. Schools cannot keep sick children in the health room at school due to the exposure to other children and school staff.

If you or your child(ren) get sick with flu like symptoms, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you **stay home** from work or school for 24 hours after the fever has resolved without the use of fever reducing medication. If the fever is resolved but you are still symptomatic in other ways and do not feel well, stay home until you are well. Call your family physician and **limit contact** with others to keep from infecting them.

**Should Family members of the sick person stay home from work or school?**

Not unless the family members have symptoms. Parents/guardians should monitor siblings carefully and keep them home if they show any symptoms.

**What kind of cleaning will be done in the schools?**

DCSD cleaning staff will continue to clean our school buildings and classrooms per the DCSD protocols. Our goal is to keep the students of the Douglas County School District healthy and safe.

**Will there be school closures?**

The health department's recommendation is that schools should not close unless they cannot operate because of a shortage of staff due to illness. If there is a change in that philosophy, we will revisit this issue.

**Will the vaccine be available soon?**

It is currently projected that a vaccine will be available by the end of October or the first part of November. We will be holding regional clinics in Douglas County to provide the vaccine to school children and others who are on the list as first to receive the vaccine, but you may also be able to get that vaccine from your family health care provider.

**How will I know when the vaccine is available?**

Information about the vaccine clinics and updated flu information will be posted on the DCSD website as it becomes available.

**Who will be the first to receive the vaccine when it becomes available?**

The first round of vaccine will go to the following:

- Children and young adults 6 months to 24 years
- Adults 25 - 64 years with chronic disease
- Pregnant females
- Caregivers of very small children
- Health care professionals
- Emergency responders who have medical duties

**Parents with additional questions regarding H1N1 flu can call the Colorado Help Line at: 1-877-462-2911.** Questions are being answered in both English and Spanish.

Additional information regarding H1N1 flu can also be found at the following websites:

*Tri-County Health*

<http://www.tchd.org>

*The Colorado Department of Health*

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us>

*Centers for Disease Control*

[http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu\\_you/html](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you/html)

If you have any questions, please reference the CDC, your personal health care provider, or your School Nurse Consultant.