

Seasonal and H1N1 Flu

It is the goal of Jim Ned CISD to promote good health for our students and manage communicable diseases. As a result of the global H1N1 illness, we are asking for your help in preventing the spread of the illness in our schools. We believe that prevention is our best plan of action and would like to share some information concerning influenza.

What is the flu?

The flu (influenza) is a highly contagious infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by the influenza viruses. Flu viruses cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the United States each year. There are many different flu viruses and sometimes a new flu virus emerges to make people sick.

Seasonal vs. H1N1

Seasonal flu is caused by viruses that already circulate among people. Most people have some immunity and a vaccine is available to help prevent it. In the United States, flu season usually starts in the late fall and lasts throughout the winter, sometimes into early spring.

H1N1 is a new and very different influenza virus and it can spread easily from person to person because people have little or no natural immunity. A new vaccine is being produced and should be ready for administration sometime in mid-October. Please consult your healthcare provider for guidelines and specific recommendations.

How does flu spread?

Both H1N1 and seasonal flu are spread mostly from person to person through coughs and sneezes. When someone with the flu coughs or sneezes, droplets containing the virus are sprayed into the air. Other individuals can become infected if they breathe the infected droplets or touch infected droplets on surfaces and then touch their own eyes, nose, or mouth.

Symptoms

Symptoms of H1N1 and seasonal flu include: fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fever, and fatigue. Diarrhea and vomiting have also been reported.

Prevention

The Center for Disease Control and Texas Department of State Health Service recommend that everyone receives the seasonal flu vaccine. Please consult your healthcare provider for guidelines and recommendations for receiving the H1N1 vaccine.

Practice General Health Habits

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away in the trash after you use it. Cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow instead of your hand if a tissue is not available.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, scrubbing all surfaces of your hands for 20 seconds, especially after you cough, sneeze, before you eat, and after returning from public areas such as school, work, church or shopping.
- Use alcohol based hand sanitizers in addition to washing and if soap and water is not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread this way
- Try to avoid close contact (about 6 feet) with sick people, including anyone in the household who is sick.

Treatment

Contact your healthcare provider early if you have flu like symptoms. Make sure you are getting plenty of rest and drinking enough fluids. **The CDC and Texas DSHS recommend that you stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone (except to get medical care) without using a fever reducing medication such as, Tylenol or Motrin, etc.** Aspirin products should never be given to children or young adults.

Please seek the advice of your healthcare provider and follow their recommendations for returning to school or work.

Call or take your child to the doctor right away if they are experiencing the following:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Flu like symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- Have other conditions, like heart or lung disease, diabetes, asthma, or other chronic health conditions.

For More information contact your healthcare provider, call 2-1-1, or go to: www.cdc.gov or www.Texasflu.org