

Dear Parents:

Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS), the California Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) continue to monitor the H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) situation.

We have been advised by CCHS that schools in Contra Costa County will not be closed unless there is a large number of students or faculty who are ill which interferes with the school's ability to function. CCHS will consider school and childcare closure on an individual basis, taking into consideration health information available at the time. We will keep you updated with any important information.

H1N1 flu is present throughout Contra Costa County. As children return to school and spend less time outdoors and more time in confined spaces, such as classrooms, CCHS expects to see more illness caused by H1N1 flu.

Please follow these prevention tips to prevent the spread of this illness:

- ✓ Check your children for symptoms of influenza (primarily fever with either a cough or a sore throat).
- ✓ Keep sick people at home. Don't send them to school, childcare or work. No one should return to school until they have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, even if they feel better.
- ✓ Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, have them use an alcohol-based hand rub to clean their hands.
- ✓ Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
- ✓ Teach your children to stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.
- ✓ Vaccinate your children and yourself with the seasonal flu vaccine.

Currently H1N1 flu vaccine is not available. CCHS will let us know when and where the vaccine will be available. However, regular, seasonal flu vaccine will be available in the fall. Although seasonal flu vaccine doesn't protect against H1N1 flu, it does protect from seasonal influenza viruses. Every year, 36,000 people die from illness related to seasonal flu in the United States.

The seasonal flu vaccine is recommended for all children ages 6 months to 19 years. This is because, as we learned with H1N1 flu, children often get the flu at school, and then can bring it home to the family. We especially want to protect younger siblings and older relatives with weaker immune systems who can have serious complications from the flu. Flu vaccine keeps children healthy and prevents them from spreading the flu to others.

Seasonal flu vaccine is also recommended for pregnant women, those who are 50 years and older, health care workers, those who care for children under 5 years old, and everyone who has a chronic illness, such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease. Anyone who wants to protect themselves and the community from seasonal flu can get vaccinated – there will be plenty of seasonal flu vaccine available..

To find out where to get seasonal flu vaccine for you and your family, contact your health care provider or health plan. You can also call the Public Health Flu Hotline at 925-313-6469 or visit www.flucliniclocator.org

Information about H1N1 flu for parents, including fun videos and podcasts you can share with your child are available online at www.cchealth.org/topics/swine_flu/parent_information.php
Prerecorded information is also available by calling Contra Costa Health Services Health Emergency Information Line at 1-888-959-9911.