

Update on H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

I am sure that most of you are aware of the resurgence of the H1N1 flu virus since the start of school. There have been many cases diagnosed in the Birmingham area. So far, the vast majority of cases have been mild. According to health officials, there are some important things to do to help prevent the spread of this flu to you and your children:

- Most importantly, wash your hands often with soap and water. The use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers is also effective.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a sleeve or tissue.
- Stay at least six feet away from anyone who is sick.
- If you are sick, PLEASE STAY HOME. The recommendation from the Center for Disease Control regarding exclusion has changed- Sick individuals should stay at home for 24 hours AFTER fever is gone (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

At school, we will be reminding students to practice these good protective measures. If your child becomes sick at school with such symptoms as fever over 100, cough, chills, fatigue, vomiting, or diarrhea, you will be notified to come and pick up your child.

Plans are under way at the state and federal levels to provide immunizations for the H1N1 virus at school. This will be a voluntary program for those interested, predicted to be offered at no cost to individuals. The vaccine is not predicted to be ready for distribution until mid-October and will require 2 separate injections, at least 3 weeks apart. We will let you know as plans develop. In the mean time, please also consider having your child immunized against the seasonal flu, which will be a separate shot from the H1N1 vaccine.

Call me with questions.

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