

October 23, 2009

Dear School Community,

This is an update on the H1N1 Virus at Sequoia Middle School. Students and/or staff members have been sent home after reporting flu-like symptoms. In at least one case, a physician has determined that the illness was H1N1 virus.

We are following the protocols as developed under the guidance of Contra Costa Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The classroom has been cleaned and the individual(s) will return to school as advised by their personal physician.

Please remember that the best defense against this or any strain of flu virus is prevention. 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.

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.