



Dear Parents:

With the confirmed presence of H1N1 swine influenza in many Lake County communities we would like to provide you with some information to help you recognize, control and prevent the spread of influenza.

Swine influenza A H1N1 virus is a new virus that has not been identified previously in people. Swine flu is thought to be spread via person-to-person contact through contaminated air droplets from coughing and sneezing from an infected person. The virus is not spread by food, including pork or pork products. Eating properly cooked and handled pork products is safe.

The symptoms of human swine flu are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, cough and sore throat. Some people with swine flu have reported additional symptoms such as runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. In some situations, the virus can develop into pneumonia. It is believed that the seasonal influenza vaccine does not provide protection against swine flu.

Take these precautions to reduce the spread of swine flu:

- **Stay home from work and keep your children home from school or childcare for 7 days or longer if you/they become ill. Even if the sick person recovers in less than 7 days they still may be contagious and should be kept home for the full 7 days. (Please refer to the flu symptom guide)**
- **Tell your school nurse about your child's symptoms so they can watch for other students and staff with same symptoms.**
- **Avoid close contact (6 feet or less) with sick people, and keep sick people away from people who are not sick.**
- **A physician's note is not required for students or staff to return to school following the 7 days.**
- **If an alternative diagnosis is made by your health care provider (strep throat or ear infection) a note with supporting evidence (lab test results) may be considered adequate for the ill person to return sooner than 7 days. (diagnosis of virus, cold or fever is not adequate .)**
- **A negative rapid influenza test is not approved for ruling out possible novel H1N1, due to frequent inaccurate results.**
- **Cover all coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of all tissues in waste containers.**
- **Cough or sneeze into your shirtsleeve if a tissue is not available. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.**
- **Wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol based hand cleaner, especially after coughing, sneezing, and blowing one's nose.**
- **Avoid touching of nose, mouth, and eyes, to reduce the spread of germs.**

- **Do not share eating utensils, water bottles, beverage containers or other personal items. Contact with these items can expose people to viruses that exist on their surfaces.**
- **Please contact your health care provider for recommendations on using antiviral medications if a household member has flu symptoms and your child or someone in the household is pregnant, has chronic respiratory or cardiac disease or is immune compromised.**

Parents should anticipate the possibility of future school closures and plan for how children could be cared for in their home in that event. Please contact your school if you have further questions and visit <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> or www.lakecountyil.gov/health for further information.

Sincerely,



Influenza-like Illness Symptom Screening Tool for Parents and Caregivers

Parents and caregivers should use the following questionnaire to assess the health status of their child on a daily basis.

Does your child have: (circle one)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Fever (100 F or greater)? | Yes | No |
| 2. Sore Throat? | Yes | No |
| 3. Cough? | Yes | No |

Should I keep my child home?

- If you checked yes to fever AND one of the other symptoms, keep your child home for seven days after symptoms start, even if they no longer are ill. If your child is still sick after seven days, keep your child at home until well for 24 hours. If you have questions about your child's health or symptoms, call your child's healthcare provider.
- If your child has been diagnosed by a healthcare provider with a different disease, such as strep, follow your healthcare provider's recommendation and school policy for when to return to school.

What should I tell my child's school?

- If you checked "yes" for fever AND one of the other symptoms, tell your child's attendance office that your child is home with influenza-like illness.
- If your child has been diagnosed by a healthcare provider with a different disease, such as strep, tell your child's attendance office.

For more information and on-going updates website at: www.lakecountyil.gov/health or <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

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