

## **FROM YOUR SCHOOL NURSE**

# **H1N1 FLU and Schools**

This information came from the Department of Health and Environment. I have condensed it to what pertains to parents and care givers of children.

Novel H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness both within Kansas and throughout the world. H1N1 flu has been shown to affect school-aged children disproportionately. With nearly one-fifth of the country’s population attending or working in schools, it is very important to implement state and federal recommendations designed to limit disease impacts to this population. Steps taken now taken now will lessen the burden of disease on students and staff later in the fall or winter, and will prevent unnecessary school dismissals.

A new H1N1 flu vaccine will be available soon. School populations will be prioritized to get the vaccine as early as possible. While recognizing that a minimal disruption of school routines may occur because of these efforts, protection offered by vaccines given in school-based clinics will substantially reduce the risk of severe disruptions later due to outbreaks. I will have vaccine here at school for students and staff. Letters and permits will be sent out later with information.

At school here we will enforce good hand hygiene. You may be asked to send hand sanitizer or wipes to school with you child, especially if they are experiencing a cold and cough. If the student is ill, they must stay home. Make sure you keep a good working thermometer at home and check temperatures before sending a child to school if they show any symptoms of being ill. All sick students and staff members will be sent home. All ill persons should remain at home until fever-free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medications). Clean all surfaces regularly with detergent cleansers. When a student becomes ill in school and has a fever, we are instructed to remove them from the classroom and provide a mask to cover the nose and mouth to reduce the spread of infectious droplets while they are waiting to go home. Students and staff members with underlying medical conditions are encouraged to seek medical advice if they become ill. If anyone needs to stay home because of illness, it is important to avoid contact with others, except to obtain needed medical care.