

Important: Mead School District H1N1 Swine Flu Information

Schools are taking steps to help prevent the spread of both seasonal and H1N1 (swine) influenza. According to the most recent data, the H1N1 virus is currently the primary cause of most influenza in our community.

The Mead School District continues to track absenteeism due to influenza on a daily basis and is in close communication with Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD), which has been extremely helpful in providing current resources. We greatly appreciate when parents report the specifics of their child's absence so we are better able to track communicable diseases.

We urge you to pay particular attention to your child's health, monitoring for influenza symptoms. Symptoms of H1N1 illness, which are similar to seasonal flu symptoms, include rapid onset of fever with cough and/or sore throat. Some people may also have diarrhea and vomiting.

If your child or any family member experiences these symptoms, stay home until symptoms have diminished and they have been free of fever (less than 100°F, without using fever reducing medication) for at least 24 hours or as directed by your health care provider.

People are being encouraged to treat flu symptoms at home to avoid spreading the illness in health care settings. If your child has symptoms mentioned above and develops difficulty breathing, chest pain, bluish skin; develops seizures, is unable to keep fluids down or is less responsive than normal, seek medical care immediately.

H1N1 has caused an increased concern for children and infants who have high-risk medical conditions and neuro-developmental conditions such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, heart conditions, seizure disorders, long-term respiratory (asthma) and lung conditions (cystic fibrosis), premature infants and others. If your child has any of these conditions that may put him/her at increased risk, we encourage you to contact your child's health care provider to discuss the risks to your child's health and his/her school attendance. Special care should be taken to protect these children from catching H1N1, and it is recommended that they be among the first to receive a vaccine once it becomes available. The H1N1 vaccine is also recommended for all people ages 6 months to 24 years of age.

To protect yourself and your family against H1N1 influenza, as well as seasonal influenza, and to help prevent the spread of disease, teach your children to:

- * Wash their hands often.
- * Cough or sneeze into their sleeve/elbow - not into their hands.
- * Cover their nose and mouth when sneezing, coughing or blowing their nose.
- * Promptly dispose of used tissues and wash hands with soap and water.
- * Not share food, utensils or beverages with others.
- * Avoid close contact with sick people.