



West Sonoma County Union High School District

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ANALY HIGH SCHOOL ♦ EL MOLINO HIGH SCHOOL ♦ LAGUNA HIGH SCHOOL

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FLU PREVENTION TIPS FOR WEST COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PARENTS

School is back in session, and the flu is in the news. The Sonoma County Office of Education, Public Health officials and local schools are working together to provide the latest flu prevention information to families and schools, in order to minimize the number of cases of flu in Sonoma County. Studies by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Federal Health and Human Services agencies indicate pregnant women and young people with chronic health conditions are at the highest risk of serious illness and complications from H1N1 2009. Dr. Carl Wong, Superintendent for Sonoma County Public Schools has emphasized, "We are urging families of school-age children to work with school administration and faculty to help keep children safe and prevent the spread of flu this fall."

Dr. Mark Netherda, Deputy Sonoma County Public Health Officer explained, "A new vaccine that will help provide immunity to the H1N1 2009 virus is under development and will be available this fall, but not until several weeks into the school year." He continued, "Simple precautions including frequent hand-washing, covering your cough, staying home when ill and regularly clean doorknobs and work surfaces are the best way to slow and prevent the spread of the flu."

Dr. Netherda explained that the Sonoma County Health Department is actively monitoring flu activity and is working with state and federal agencies to develop local plans for providing the new immunization as soon as it becomes available. The H1N1 2009 vaccine may require two doses spaced a few weeks apart and will be given in addition to the vaccine for the seasonal flu. Instructions regarding how and where to go for the vaccine will be released as soon as plans are finalized. At this time, health officials anticipate it may be available at many of the usual sites where people go for seasonal flu shots, as well as at mass immunization sites that will be set up around the county.

H1N1 2009 flu spreads the same way as seasonal flu, mainly through coughing or sneezing by infected people. The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to those of regular seasonal flu.

Information for parents:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.** You can set a good example by doing this yourself. West Sonoma County Union High School district is installing alcohol-based hand rub dispensers in all classrooms and common areas that do not already have sinks, soap and paper towels.

"The mission of the West Sonoma County Union High School District is to provide high quality instruction as student achievement is our top priority."

- **Teach your children not to share personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues or by using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.**
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea. Children or family members at high risk for complications of the flu, including pregnant women, those with asthma, diabetes, compromised immune systems or neuromuscular diseases should call their health care provider as soon as possible if they become ill to determine if treatment with antiviral medications is needed.
- **Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol® or Advil®.** Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick. Any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home.**
- **Vaccinate your child for both the seasonal flu and H1N1 flu when the vaccine becomes available this fall.**

If the flu becomes more severe in your school or around the County, additional steps that may be taken to prevent the spread of the flu include:

- Conducting active fever and flu symptom screening of students and staff as they arrive at school
- Making changes to increase the space between people such as moving desks farther apart and postponing class trips
- Increasing the dismissal period for students and staff from school to at least 7 days if they become sick.
- Closing schools if the situation becomes serious enough that the Public Health Officer authorizes such action

For more information, about the flu, see the Sonoma County Public Health website at www.sonoma-county.org/H1N1 or call the Public Health Information Line at (707) 565-4477. Information about the flu is also available at these additional sites:

www.CDC.gov/H1N1

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/SwineInfluenza.aspx>

www.sonoma-county.org/H1N1

If you have questions or concerns, contact your school principal or Keller McDonald, District Superintendent at kmcdonald.do@wscuhd.k12.ca.us or (707) 824-6412.