

# Seasonal Flu and Novel H<sub>1</sub>N<sub>1</sub> Flu

## Guidance for Parents and Families

### From the Lenawee County Health Department

Symptoms of flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and fatigue. A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius).



### Four ways to keep from getting sick with the flu:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Use alcohol-based hand cleaners when soap and water are not available.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
- **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

### Prepare Ahead: follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the school year:

- Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed.
- Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
- Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.
- Update emergency contact lists.
- Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if schools are dismissed or your child is sick and must stay home.

**Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease** from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age and those children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, metabolic conditions, neurologic and neuromuscular disorders, or who are pregnant.

- Keep your child away from people who are sick.
- Consider staying away from public gatherings if there is a lot of flu in the community.
- Contact your doctor immediately if your child is sick. This is important because the antiviral medicines used to treat flu work best when started within the first 2 days of getting sick.

Contact CDC – Centers for Disease Control 24 Hours/Every Day  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or TTY: (888) 232-6348 or [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)  
[www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

**Recognize if your children are sick:** Watch carefully for the signs and symptoms of flu or unusual behavior that may be a sign your child is sick. Symptoms of flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and fatigue. A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, your child might have a fever if he or she feels warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.

**Watch for emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention.** These warning signs include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not urinating or no tears when crying
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

**Keep your sick child at home** until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Keep your child home unless they need to go to the doctor.

- **Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks clear fluids** (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants, Pedialyte®) to keep from being dehydrated.
- **Ask your doctor about antiviral medications or fever reducing medicines** for sick household members. Aspirin **should not** be given to children or teenagers who have flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.
- **Keep your sick child in a separate room** (a sick room) in the house as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are not sick. Consider designating a single person as the main caregiver for the sick child. Give the child a mask to wear if it is not too uncomfortable.
- **Clean surfaces and** objects that your child frequently touches with your regular cleaning agents.

Talk to your school administrators about their pandemic or emergency plan.

Stay informed!