



An Important Message Concerning Your Child's Health

As we return to school this year, students will bring more than books, pencils and new backpacks with them. When groups of people gather, particularly children, they have an increased potential of contracting an infectious disease. Over the summer months, Jessamine Schools have been working in partnership with the Jessamine County Health Department to prepare for our return to school and the potential health issues that might arise. We have been told by public health officials to anticipate more illness from 2009 H1N1 influenza (Swine Flu) than this past spring and more school-based outbreaks because influenza is typically transmitted more easily in fall and winter.

You may have noticed information in the news recently related to the H1N1 Influenza. The H1N1 virus is thought to spread the same way the seasonal flu is spread, through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing. The virus may spread when individuals inhale the droplets as well as when they touch respiratory droplets on hard surfaces and objects and then touch their mouth, nose and eyes. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), school-aged children are particularly susceptible to both contracting and spreading the H1N1 virus.

The CDC states that the primary focus of influenza prevention activities should be good hygiene, not environmental cleaning. The same steps used to prevent the common cold and seasonal flu virus apply when trying to prevent the spread of the H1N1 flu virus. To help prevent the spread of influenza and other infectious disease, teach your family to practice good hygiene habits, not only during flu season, but year round.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Regularly clean areas and items likely to have frequent hand contact.
- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing with a tissue or use the bend of the elbow. Discard tissues immediately and wash hands.
- Do not share personal or food service items.

We need your help to prevent widespread influenza and other illness in our schools.

The CDC has stated that closing school is not the best option in most cases when dealing with an influenza outbreak. The most effective prevention practice once cases begin is to keep sick individuals away from others. If your child is experiencing cold or flu symptoms, please monitor his/her condition closely to determine if your child should stay home from school for rest and observation. Some symptoms which may signal the onset of illness include: a stuffy or runny nose and/or a cough, mild sore throat, headache and a mild stomach ache.

People with influenza can be contagious for more than 24 hours after their fever goes away. Definitely keep your child at home for treatment and observation if he or she has any of these symptoms: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, fatigue/weakness, frequent coughing, nasal congestion with frequent blowing of nose, sore throat or trouble breathing. Contact your health care provider for advice on your child's condition.

Please note that as medical experts continue to study and learn more about the H1N1 virus, the CDC and other agencies will provide additional guidance to help schools reduce exposure to influenza while limiting the disruption of day-to-day activities and the vital learning that goes on in our schools. Please watch for additional notices; as we receive new information, we will continue to keep you informed. In the coming weeks, we will provide the most current information on H1N1 and updates as well as links to additional resources on the district website www.jessamine.kyschools.us

Important information regarding MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant S. Aureus) on the back.