

Dear Parent(S),

As we enter into the flu season again it is important to know what we can do to lower the effects on our children. Contra Costa Health Service (CCHS) continues to monitor the H1N1 influenza (swine flu) situation. H1N1 flu illness has been seen throughout Contra Costa County and seasonal (regular) flu season has started. Flu can spread when students sick with flu are near others. CCHS anticipates more H1N1 flu illness as students return to school and spend less time outdoors and more time in confined spaces such as classrooms.

**Please follow these tips to help keep your family healthy and prevent the spread of illness:**

**-Check** your children daily for flu-like symptoms (usually fever, 100 degrees or above ) with a cough and/or a sore throat).

**-Keep** sick children at home. Sick children should not go to school. Call your child's pediatrician if your child has fever. Sick children should remain at home until free of fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine. A doctor's note is not necessary for return.

**-Call** your child's health care provider if your child has fever for more than 24 hours. Take your child to the emergency department if flu-like symptoms last for more than three days; or if the fever stops without medicine, but then returns a day or two later; or if experiencing a medical emergency (difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen; sudden dizziness; confusion; seizures; and severe or persistent vomiting).

**-Teach** your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or their elbow and to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer. Supervise young children when they use sanitizer.

**-Teach** your children to tell their teacher if they feel ill and to stay at least six feet away from sick people.

**-Vaccinate** your children and yourself with the seasonal flu vaccine as soon as possible and the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. Flu vaccines protect for at least one year and regular flu season can last until May. It is never too early or too late to get vaccinated.

Seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines are separate vaccines. Both vaccines are available now and are recommended for all children ages 6 months to 19 years. This is because children often get the flu at school and then can bring it home to the family.

To find out where to get flu vaccine for you and your family, contact your health care provider or health plan. You can also call the CCHS Health Emergency Information Line at (888)959-9911 or visit [www.flucliniclocator.org](http://www.flucliniclocator.org).

Find more information for parents about H1N1 flu, including fun videos and podcasts you can share with your children, at [www.cchealth.org/topics/swine\\_flu/parent\\_information.php](http://www.cchealth.org/topics/swine_flu/parent_information.php).