

Sept. 16, 2009

Dear DISD Parents,

You may be hearing in the news of increased H1N1 flu numbers in our area, and it is true that we do have higher numbers of students with flu-like illness (fever, cough, sore throat) absent from school this week than we did last week, some from the same classrooms.

We are also seeing a number of students with other virus-type symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea) who are being sent home from school by our school nurse.

While our numbers are a little higher than usual for this time of year, we are still not seeing any alarming trends, and we do expect that our numbers of absent students will most likely increase before it begins to ease up - it is that time of year.

The health and safety of our students and staff are very important - please be reassured that we are taking all steps possible to ensure a healthy environment for all, including:

- increased custodial services and cleaning procedures, meeting and exceeding the CDC's cleaning guidelines for schools
- daily surveillance for flu-like illness by the school RN and teachers, monitoring student symptoms carefully
- promoting good public health measures (handwashing, how to cough and sneeze properly) and educating our students, staff, and visitors regarding these preventive measures
- isolating students as much as possible who are at school with symptoms of flu-like illness until they can be picked up by their parents
- contacting parents as soon as symptoms are discovered
- maintaining daily contact with the health department to monitor area trends, and planning vaccination clinics to be done in conjunction with them around the county
- participating in weekly state-wide conferences to hear information about trends and concerns from all over Texas
- working closely with health care providers to ensure good communication about student health
- requiring that teachers and other staff who have symptoms stay home until they are free from symptoms for 24 hours without the use of medication

Here is what **you** can do to help:

- role model good health habits at home
- keep your children home when they are sick until all their symptoms of illness are gone for at least 24 hours without medication
- let the attendance clerk at your child's school know the reason your child is absent

- sign up for e-alerts on the main DISD website, so you'll receive automatic messages any time updates are done
- keep the school informed of changes in contact information
- read the information "When to Keep your Child Home from School" on the DISD Health Services website, and maintain good communication with the campus RN regarding any health issues with your child.
- talk to your health care provider about getting seasonal and H1N1 flu shots

Keep in mind that whether this is H1N1 or seasonal flu (most of it is likely H1N1 right now), the treatment is still the same...stay home, rest, get plenty of fluids and sleep.

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are still very mild to moderate in nearly all cases, and the expectation at this point is that this will continue to be the trend.

We will keep you updated on our main website, and please, as always, feel free to call if you have specific questions that we can help with. We appreciate our Denton ISD parents!