

State of Montana DPHHS HAN UPDATE

Distributed via the DPHHS Health Alert Network (HAN) System

Wednesday, May 6, 2009 10:20 AM

DPHHS Contact Information: Communicable Disease 444-0273

DPHHS recommends you do forward this HAN message on to your local HAN contacts.

UPDATED INFORMATION ON SCHOOL CLOSURES

New information on disease severity and the extent of community spread warrant revision of the CDC's school closure guidance. At this time, CDC recommends the primary means to reduce spread of influenza in schools is to focus on early identification of ill students and staff, staying home when ill, and good cough and hand hygiene etiquette. Decisions about school closure should be at the discretion of local authorities based on local considerations, including public concern and the impact of school absenteeism and staffing shortages.

Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has distributed the information attached to schools and is emphasizing working closely with local and state health authorities as school issues are identified. DPHHS request local health agencies call the DPHHS Communicable Disease program to consult as issues arise.

Please refer to the attached guidance from CDC regarding control of H1N1 Influenza in school settings.

Recommendations include:

School closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) and, in general, is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function.

Schools that were closed based on previous interim CDC guidance related to this outbreak may reopen.

Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days even if symptoms resolve sooner.

Students, faculty and staff who are still sick 7 days after they become ill should continue to stay home from school until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.

Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.

Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.

Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings other than school.

School administrators should communicate regularly with local public health officials to obtain guidance about reporting of influenza-like illnesses in the school.

Schools can help serve as a focus for educational activities aimed at promoting ways to reduce the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

Students, faculty and staff should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.

DPHHS Health Alert Hotline 1-800-701-5769

Visit the DPHHS Health Alert Network Website at www.han.mt.gov

The goal of Montana's Health Alert Network is to transmit information to local public health authorities as quickly as possible, and assign a suitable priority to the message that is sensitive to the impact of a health-related event providing information relative to the public health and safety of Montanans. For questions or comments relative to Montana's HAN system you may contact the DPHHS HAN Coordinator, Gerry Wheat at [<mailto:gwheat@mt.gov>](mailto:gwheat@mt.gov)

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

You have received this message based upon the information contained within our emergency notification data base. If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would like us to use please notify us as soon as possible by e-mail at hhshan@mt.gov <mailto:hhshan@mt.gov>

MEMO FROM OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION SENT 5/5/2009

H1N1 (swine) influenza

Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control continue to evolve. Today the Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and acting CDC director Richard Besser announced new CDC guidance on closure of schools and childcare facilities.

The Office of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) are working closely to ensure up-to-date and accurate information is available to schools regarding H1N1 (swine) influenza. The DPHHS has been working closely with local public health officials to provide information on the status of H1N1 (swine) influenza in our communities. For the latest guidance visit the DPHHS website at: <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/swineflu>

The DPHHS is available to work in conjunction with your local health authority when making decisions regarding your school. If you have questions related to H1N1 (swine) influenza, we would encourage you to continue to work closely with your local health authority.

Linda Kaiser, Office of Public Instruction
lkaiser@mt.gov
406-444-3160

Official E-Mail from the Montana Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, Superintendent



H1N1 Flu

Update on School (K – 12) and Childcare Facilities: Interim CDC Guidance in Response to Human Infections with the Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus

May 5, 2009, 6:45 PM EDT

Background



This document provides updated interim guidance for schools and childcare facilities regarding the prevention of the spread of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus.

Initial cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) in the United States included school-aged students and were associated with travel to Mexico and school-based outbreaks. Early information from Mexico indicated that many previously healthy young adults were hospitalized with rapidly progressive pneumonia, frequently resulting in respiratory failure requiring mechanical ventilation and death.

Based on this initial information, CDC recommended consideration of school closure as an option to lessen the risk of infection with this novel influenza virus in order to protect students, staff, parents and other caregivers from a potentially severe disease as well as limit spread into the community.

New information on disease severity and the extent of community spread warrant revision of the school closure guidance. As of May 4, 2009, more than 1000 confirmed or probable cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) have been reported from 44 states, with numerous disease clusters, indicating spread within communities that makes individual school closure less effective as a control measure. Most U.S. cases have not been severe and are comparable in severity to seasonal influenza. CDC and local and state health officials will continue to closely monitor the severity and spread of this novel H1N1 influenza outbreak.

At this time, CDC recommends the primary means to reduce spread of influenza in schools is to focus on early identification of ill students and staff, staying home when ill, and good cough and hand hygiene etiquette. Decisions about school closure should be at the discretion of local authorities based on local considerations, including public concern and the impact of school absenteeism and staffing shortages.

Recommendations

- School closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) and, in general, is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function.
- Schools that were closed based on previous interim CDC guidance related to this outbreak may reopen.
- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days even if symptoms resolve sooner.
- Students, faculty and staff who are still sick 7 days after they become ill should continue to stay home from school until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.
- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.
- Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.
- Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings other than school.
- School administrators should communicate regularly with local public health officials to obtain guidance about reporting of influenza-like illnesses in the school.
- Schools can help serve as a focus for educational activities aimed at promoting ways to reduce the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Students, faculty and staff should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.

Further guidance can be found in:

- [Questions and Answers About Novel H1N1 Flu](#)
- [What to Do If You Get Flu-Like Symptoms](#)
- [Interim Guidance for H1N1 Flu: Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home](#)
- Links to non-federal organizations are provided solely as a service to our users. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CDC or the federal government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links.

File Formas Help:



[How do you view different file formats\(PDF, DOC, PPT, MPEG\) on this site?](#)

Page last reviewed May 5, 2009 6:45 PM ET

Page last updated May 5, 2009 6:45 PM ET

Content source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333, USA
800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348, 24 Hours/Every Day - cdcinfo@cdc.gov*

