

 <p>SACRAMENTO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH</p>	<p>H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Fact Sheet from Sacramento County Public Health <i>Glennah Trochet, M.D. Sacramento County Public Health Officer</i></p> <p>Advice for Parents of School-age Children</p>
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This page provides parents and students with some important information on H1N1 flu. With children back in school, spending less time outdoors and more time in confined spaces such as classrooms, we expect to see more illness caused by H1N1 flu.

H1N1 flu is present throughout Sacramento County. Schools in Sacramento County will not be dismissed for cases of H1N1 influenza unless there are a large number of students or faculty who are ill, interfering with the school's ability to function. Sacramento County Public Health will consider school and childcare dismissal on an individual basis, taking into consideration the best health information available at the time. We ask that children and their families follow these prevention tips:

Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is simple and it's the best way to prevent infection and illness. Teach your children to wash their hands the right way! When washing hands with soap and water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 15-20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to a friend.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer.
- If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- Always use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.

If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast-acting.

When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply hand rub to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.

Avoid Contact with Sick People

Try to avoid close contact (within six feet) with anyone who is sick with the flu. People of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, young children and people 65 years and older should be especially careful. Infants should not be cared for by sick family members.

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Stay Home if Sick

If your child is sick, keep him/her home, providing plenty of rest and fluids. It is best if your child is in a separate room, so as not to spread the flu to other household members. If your child has no chronic illnesses, it is likely that s/he will get better without needing to see a doctor; however, watch for warning signs that your child may be getting very sick. These 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; pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen; confusion or improvement followed by a return of fever and worse cough. Keep your child home until s/he has had no fever for 24 hours without using anti-fever medicines. **A doctor's note is not necessary to return to school.**

Cover Coughs and Sneezes

H1N1 spreads from person to person in the same way as seasonal flu: through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. The influenza virus is put into the air and inhaled by those nearby or picked up from surfaces where the virus might have landed. Teach children to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Make sure they throw the tissue in the trash after they've used it and wash their hands the right way. If tissue is not available, teach children the "Dracula cough." Children should simply cough or sneeze into their inner elbow or upper arm in the same way that Count Dracula hides his face!

Get Vaccinated

Although we don't yet know exactly when H1N1 flu vaccine will be available, seasonal flu vaccine will be available late summer or early fall. Seasonal flu vaccine doesn't protect against H1N1 flu, but it does protect against seasonal influenza viruses that will also be circulating. Every year, an estimated 36,000 people die from illness related to seasonal flu in the United States.

The seasonal flu vaccine is recommended for all children ages 6 months to 19 years. This is because, as we learned with H1N1 flu, children often get the flu at school and then bring it home to the family. It's especially important to protect younger siblings and older relatives with weaker immune systems who can have serious complications from the flu. Flu vaccine keeps children healthy and prevents them from spreading the flu to others. You can get the vaccine from your health care provider or check www.SCPH.com for flu clinic locations.

Seasonal flu vaccine is also recommended for almost everyone else in our community—especially pregnant women, those who are 50 years and older, health care workers, those who care for children under 5 years old, and everyone who has a chronic illness, such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease.

To find out where to get seasonal flu vaccine for you and your family, contact your health care provider or health plan. You can also visit www.SCPH.com for Sacramento County flu clinic locations.

Online Resources:

www.SCPH.com
www.twitter.com/SacPublicHealth
www.CDPH.ca.gov
www.flu.gov

Sacramento County Public Health Division
Sacramento County Public Health Division Twitter Feed
California Department of Public Health
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention