



HARFORD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Health Officer

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October 23, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that there has been an increase in the number of students with influenza-like symptoms in your child's school. Influenza-like illness is defined as having a temperature of 100 ° F or higher AND a cough OR sore throat. The Harford County Public School system is working with Harford County Health Department to monitor the situation, and at this time, schools will remain open and operate normally as per the direction of the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The best way to reduce the spread of influenza, seasonal or H1N1, and any other virus is to:

- Teach your child to cover their nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze with their sleeve or a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash after they use it.
- Teach your child to wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Teach your child to not share personal items, like drinks, food, or unwashed utensils.
- Teach your child to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Keep your child home from school if they are sick. Students and staff with flu-like symptoms must **stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.**
- Students who come to school with flu like symptoms will be evaluated by our nursing staff, sent to a room separate from others, and given a surgical mask to wear until he or she can be sent home.


We assure you that the health and well being of our students are our top priorities, and we are doing everything possible to address the situation. Some of the steps the school is taking include:

- School staff will continue to emphasize the importance of the basic foundations of influenza prevention as detailed above.
- Our custodial staff will continue to clean areas that students and staff touch often with an approved germicidal that is effective against influenza viruses. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not believe any additional disinfection of environmental surfaces beyond the recommended routine cleaning is required.

For more about H1N1 and seasonal flu viruses, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu, www.flu.gov, <http://www.flu.maryland.gov> or <http://www.harfordcountyhealth.com>

Sincerely,


Susan Kelly, RS
Health Officer


Robert M. Tomback, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools