

WARREN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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Claude W. Mitchell, MPH
Health Officer



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Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Warren County Health Department (WCHD) has been working closely with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor flu conditions. We will continue to work closely with these agencies throughout the school year and we will update you with new information as soon as it is available.

WCHD receives guidance and recommendations for schools from the NJDHSS and CDC. This guidance will be shared with all school districts in the county. By following these public health recommendations, we can minimize the risk of spreading seasonal influenza (flu) and H1N1 influenza.

The current CDC influenza guidance is based on the knowledge and experience obtained from the 2009 Spring H1N1 Outbreak. CDC guidance recommends keeping schools open because school closures were not an effective means of reducing the spread of the H1N1 flu in the spring of 2009. The CDC, NJDHSS, and Warren County Health Officials will continue to monitor the situation and work closely with the Warren County School Officials to update current guidance.

The current guidance states as follows:

- Students and staff with influenza (flu) –like symptoms should not attend school.
 - fever
 - cough
 - sore throat
 - runny or stuffy nose
 - body aches/ headaches
 - chills and fatigue
 - vomiting or have diarrhea.
- Students and staff with influenza (flu-) like illness should remain home at least **24 hours** after fever has ended without the use of fever-reducing medications (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, and Aspirin).
- Parents/staff should report any flu like symptoms when reporting absence to school.

There are effective methods of prevention which help minimize the spread of the flu. The CDC recommends the following:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.
- **Teach your children to cover their coughs and sneezes** with tissues. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or do not have signs of fever, without the use of fever-reducing drugs (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, and Aspirin). Keeping children with a fever home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.**

This year the CDC recommends that children 6 months to 18 years of age get vaccinated annually for seasonal flu. Parents are reminded that students in pre-school up to age 5 are required to have the seasonal flu shot. It is important to note that the seasonal flu vaccine will offer protection from the seasonal flu but **not** the H1N1 flu. The CDC is also recommending that children be vaccinated for H1N1 flu. Pending approval by the federal government, we expect an H1N1 vaccine sometime in late October or early November. **This vaccine will be voluntary.** Once the CDC releases more vaccine information, updates will follow. For more information about the H1N1 vaccine please visit the www.cdc.gov/h1n1

The most current influenza information is available at the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services www.nj.gov/health/er/h1n1/ website, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents .

We appreciate your cooperation as we continue to work together. Please contact the Warren County Health Department at 908-475-7960 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Claude W. Mitchell, MPH
Warren County Health Officer