

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 196  
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools  
*Educating our students to reach their full potential*

## Influenza-like Illness FAQs

September 2009

**Q: *How did the school district prepare for the flu?***

A: The school district's lead nurse and other staff were in regular contact with representatives of Dakota County Public Health and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) throughout the summer, discussing plans for preventing the spread of sickness and how we will handle cases where students and staff have symptoms of influenza-like illness.

**Q: *Why do we refer to "influenza-like illness" and not H1N1 or swine flu?***

A: Because we are looking for symptoms of influenza-like illness, which are a fever of 100 degrees or higher and a cough or sore throat. Rarely, if ever, will we know what type of flu someone has, seasonal or H1N1.

**Q: *What are the three most effective things everyone can do to stay healthy and help prevent the spread of illness?***

A: 1) Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face; 2) cover your coughs and sneezes, and 3) stay home from school and work when you are sick.

**Q: *What happens if a student gets sick during the school day?***

A: Students at all levels should see the school nurse before they go home sick. Students who have influenza-like symptoms will be asked to wait in a designated area in or near the office until a parent or guardian can pick them up.

**Q: *When can students return to school?***

A: Students who get the flu should stay home from school until they are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications such as Ibuprofen, Motrin or Tylenol. These guidelines should be followed even if the student is on anti-viral medication such as Tamiflu.

**Q: *Should there be any special cleaning of classrooms or equipment?***

A: No. Health officials confirmed the routine cleaning that already happens is adequate.

**Q: *Can students and staff bring hand sanitizer to school?***

A: Yes, for personal use and/or to share with others. In addition, there will be a hand sanitizer dispenser available in each school cafeteria.

**Q: *Are we tracking cases of influenza-like illness in our schools?***

A: Yes, we are following MDH recommendations to request information on cases of influenza-like illness in our schools. Parents who call the school attendance line to report their child absent will be asked if their child has symptoms of influenza-like illness, which are a fever of 100 degrees or higher and a cough or sore throat. If a parent says their child is "sick" but does not

specify the illness, the child will be counted as a case of influenza-like illness, per MDH guidelines.

Q: ***When will parents be notified about cases of influenza-like illness in their child's school?***

A: MDH established a reporting threshold of 5 percent of a school's total enrollment (e.g. 100 cases at one time in a high school of 2,000 students). If this threshold is reached, the school nurse will report the information to MDH and the school will notify staff and parents via the SchoolConnects notification service. The message will simply state that the school reached the MDH reporting threshold of 5 percent, which they define as a spike in illness. Parents will be encouraged to continue monitoring their children for influenza-like symptoms, keep them home if they are sick but send them to school if they are well.

Q: ***When can I get a flu vaccine?***

A: Seasonal flu vaccine is available now; an H1N1 vaccine is expected to become available in October. We will share information as it becomes available.

Q: ***Can siblings of ill students continue to attend school?***

A: Students can attend school if they are not experiencing symptoms of influenza-like illness.