



Public Health Message

from the Fort Wayne-AlLEN County Department of Health

Date: April 30, 2009

To: School Nurses

Thank you for the hard work you are doing. I did want to give you an update regarding this issue.

The new name of this virus is Influenza A (H1N1)-North American/Human flu.

As I am sure you have heard, the WHO has raised the pandemic level to 5, which means that a pandemic is evident. While we have had one case in Indiana, we have had not cases of H1N1 flu in Allen County.

Recommendations (if you are not already doing this)

- First and most importantly, remind parents and enforce policies for having ill children stay at home during their illness.
- At this time, exclusion is not recommended for school or childcare participants who have recently traveled to an affected area and who do not have symptoms, even if they have a family member who is ill.
- A child may be infectious for up to 10 days after illness onset with influenza while adults are generally infectious for 5-7 days.
- Please increase education on respiratory hygiene and monitor attendees for acute febrile respiratory illness (if you are not already doing this)
- Staff and children (as developmentally appropriate) should all be taught and asked to follow these steps that prevent the transmission of infections such as influenza:
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Wash hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing.
 - Stay home if you're sick, especially with a fever.

CDC Recommendations for School Dismissal and Childcare Facility*Closure:

- Dismissal of students should be strongly considered in schools with a confirmed or a suspected case epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case.
- Decisions regarding broader school dismissal within these communities should be left to local authorities, taking into account the extent of ILI in the community.
- If the school dismisses students or a childcare facility closes, they should also cancel all school or childcare related gatherings and encourage parents and students to avoid congregating outside of the school.
- Schools and childcare facilities should dismiss students for a time period to be evaluated on an ongoing basis depending upon epidemiological findings.
- Schools and childcare facilities should consult with their local or state health departments for guidance on reopening. If no additional confirmed or suspected cases are identified among students (or school-based personnel) for a period of 7 days, schools may consider reopening.

Schools and childcare facilities in unaffected areas should begin to prepare for the possibility of school dismissal or childcare facility closure. This includes asking teachers, parents and officials in charge of critical school-associated programs (such as meal services) to make contingency plans.

For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

Thank you for your assistance in keeping our community safe and healthy!

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