

Preparing for the seasonal flu and the possibility of pandemic flu
Up-to-date information about H1N1 flu available on national website



Along with health and government organizations across the state, the Lee's Summit R-7 School District has been preparing for both the normal seasonal flu as well as the pandemic flu. Pandemic flu is similar to the seasonal flu but is caused by a new influenza virus that has not previously circulated so that it is more easily spread.

During late April, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began tracking cases of H1N1 virus infection in individuals in the United States and worldwide. For up-to-date information about the H1N1 flu outbreak, visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/> and select "H1N1 flu." The CDC website also includes tips on how to stay healthy. It is important to remember that the H1N1 strain of influenza appears to be no more serious than the regular seasonal flu.

Within the R-7 School District, parents have reported some students with influenza-like symptoms. Schools are monitoring these reports, which are not above what would be considered normal for our district.

As with any potential for infectious disease, the R-7 Health Services Department is working closely with the Jackson County Health Department to help ensure a healthy and safe environment for students. R-7 Health Services staff members routinely track flu-like symptoms within schools and report them to county officials. In addition, the R-7 School District takes extensive precautions to clean and sanitize any surfaces which have the potential to spread illness. All contact surfaces (countertops, sinks, restroom fixtures and drinking fountains) are disinfected each night. In addition, student desks are cleaned on a regular basis by the custodial staff. Every school has at least two hand-sanitizing dispensers for use by students, staff and visitors.

R-7 Health Services staff members have attended training sessions regarding the possibility of a pandemic flu virus, and the district's Emergency Operations Team has also received pandemic-flu information.

All influenza viruses are mainly transmitted from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A lesser mode of transmission occurs when a person touches something that has the flu virus on it and then touches his or her mouth, eyes or nose.

A few tips that will help children and adults avoid the flu and keep from spreading the disease follow.

Helpful hints to prevent the spread of disease

- Practice **frequent hand washing** using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. You may also use hand sanitizer when it is difficult to wash your hands.
- **Avoid touching** your mouth, nose and eyes because the virus can spread when your hands touch surfaces infested with germs.

- Remember to **cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing and sneezing. If a tissue is not available, you are encouraged to sneeze or cough into the upper portion of your shirt sleeve and avoid sneezing or coughing into your hands (which are more likely to touch surfaces and other people and spread the disease).
- **Do not share drinks**, water bottles, eating utensils or cell phones with others.
- **Practice "social distancing,"** especially in the case of a pandemic. Stand at least three feet away from others if you or the other person is infected with the flu.
- If you are sick with the flu, **stay home** to prevent spreading it to others at school and in the workplace. If you believe you or your children are becoming ill with influenza-like symptoms (such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue), contact your local healthcare provider.
- Children and adults should be **fever-free for 24 hours** before returning to work or school.
- If possible, get a **flu shot**.



How do you tell the difference between the common cold and the flu? If you have a stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat and a hacking cough, you probably have a cold. If you have a high fever, extreme tiredness, a dry cough and severe headache, muscle and body aches, you probably have the flu.

If you would like additional information about preparing for a pandemic flu, a helpful booklet from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is available at http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3/PanFluCommunityGuide.pdf