

MASON CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Hal F. Minear
Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services

September 21, 2009

Dear Parents and Families,

As you are aware the seasonal flu, along with the H1N1, is in the news. Please know that Mason City Community School District (MCCSD) has been working with Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health (CGCDPH) in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), Iowa Department of Education (IDE), and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since early summer regarding influenza and H1N1. Our communication has focused on prevention and a review of MCCSD's Pandemic Influenza Response Plan.

MCCSD is doing a number of things during the school day to help prevent the spread of influenza.

We are:

- Encouraging students and staff to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue then discard the tissue. If they don't have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve/elbow area, not their hands.
- Asking students and staff to practice good hand washing by using soap and water (while singing a song such as "Happy Birthday" twice) or using an alcohol-based (over 60%) hand cleaner.
- Watching for children who may be ill and sending them to the school nurse for further evaluation.
- Watching for signs or symptoms of a fever. A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit. We are also watching for fever-like symptoms, for example, the person feels warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
- Cleaning surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, door knobs, keyboards and pens.

YOU can help prevent the spread of influenza by:

- Teaching your children to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Teaching your children to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue then discard the tissue. If they don't have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve/elbow area, not their hands.
- Helping your children understand the process of how germs are spread. For example, touching their eyes, nose or mouth with their hands and then touching another person or an object, such a door knob, transfers their germs.
- Teaching your children not to share personal items such as lip gloss/chap stick, drinks, food or utensils.
- Being aware of the signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms of the flu may include a fever (temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, feeling very tired, stomach ache or vomiting and diarrhea.
- Not sending your children to school if they are sick. Keeping your sick child home is the responsible thing to do. Keeping your sick child home protects fellow students and school staff, especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness from the flu.
- Keeping sick children home for an additional 24 hours once the fever is gone. The CDC is advising that people who are ill (students and staff) should stay home for an additional 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever. **NOTE:** The 24 hours would be without the use of fever-reducing medicine for that time period.

"To provide quality education in a caring and responsive environment."

When the H1N1 vaccine trials have been completed the first groups anticipated to receive the H1N1 vaccine will be the following:

- Pregnant women.
- Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age.
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel.
- All people from 6 months through 24 years of age.
- Persons 25 through 64 years of age who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

CGCDPH indicated children (age 6 months) through young adults (age 24) are included in the most vulnerable population and will be one of the initial groups eligible to receive the vaccine. The H1N1 vaccine is being approved for adults and it appears only one (1) shot will be needed. There is no determination as of yet if this will be the same for young children and school-age students.

MCCSD may become a clinic site for the H1N1 flu vaccine and it is important to note that this vaccine will be FREE to everyone. CGCDPH is in the process of developing permission slips for parents in the event that MCCSD is able to provide the vaccine on-site to students and staff.

The MCCSD Board of Education is reviewing the current district attendance policy to ensure that students who must be out of school for a significant amount of time due to this illness will not be penalized in any way for missing school.

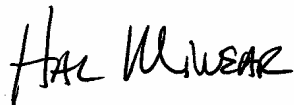
Please find attached to this letter a poster that has a list of dates, times, and locations of where the public **SEASONAL** flu clinics will be offered by the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health.

Reminder: Seasonal flu is NOT the same as the H1N1 strain.

If you would like further information you may go to www.flu.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. You may also go to the CGCDPH website at www.cghealth.com. Below are some numbers that you may call locally for more information:

Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health	641-421-9300
Contact your child's school nurse	Your School's Number
Contact MCCSD Central Office	641-421-4402

Sincerely,



Hal F. Minear
Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services

Influenza vs. Cold

Symptom		Influenza ("Flu")	Colds (Viral URI)
Fever		Usually present & high (102-104°F or 39-40°C); typically lasts 3-4 days	Uncommon If present, typically low-grade
Chills		Common	Uncommon
Headache		Very common	Uncommon
Aches and pains, muscle aches, chest discomfort		Very common Often severe	Slight to Moderate
Fatigue and weakness		Moderate - severe; can last up to 14-21 days	Mild
Extreme exhaustion		Very common early in illness	Extremely Rare
Stuffy or runny nose		Common	Very common
Sneezing		Sometimes	Common
Sore throat		Common	Common
Cough	Character	Non-productive ("dry") cough is typical	Hacking cough, often productive; usually responds to cough medications
	Severity	Moderate	Mild to Moderate
	Duration	Typically 3-7 days; occasionally to 14 days	Typically 3-7 days
	Paroxysms (coughing fits)	Uncommon	Rare
Infectious Period		1 day before symptom onset and 3-7 days after	Variable; typically 4-7 days after symptom onset; can be longer

Say "Boo!" To the Flu!



The following public SEASONAL flu clinics will be offered by nurses from the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health:

Date	Time	Location
Mon. Sept. 21	12:30-2:30 PM	Thornton Town hall
Mon. Sept. 21 Vaccine is Available at the Health Department Immunization Clinic		
Tues. Sept. 22	8:30-11:30 AM	Clear Lake Senior Center
Fri. Sept. 25	9:00-10:00 AM	Swaledale Town Hall
Fri. Sept. 25	11:00 AM-1:00 PM	Zion Lutheran Church, Clear Lake
Tues. Sept. 29	10:00-11:30 AM	Plymouth Town Hall
Wed. Sept. 30	8:30-11:00 AM	NIACC Activity Center
Mon. Oct. 5 Health Department Immunization Clinic stays open until 6:30 PM		
Mon. Oct. 5	10:00-11:00 AM	Our Savior's Church, Mason City
Tues. Oct. 6	1:00-2:00 PM	Meservey Public Library
Fri. Oct. 9	11:00 AM-1:00 PM	Hy Vee West
Sat. Oct. 17	9:00 AM- Noon	Health Dept. Immunization Clinic
Mon. Nov. 2 Health Department Immunization Clinic stays open until 6:30 PM		
Sat. Nov. 21	9:00 AM- Noon	Health Dept. Immunization Clinic

Parents: Public Health Nurses will also provide seasonal flu vaccine for the ENTIRE FAMILY at these school conferences.

Mon. Sept. 28	4:30-7:30 PM	Mason City High School
Mon. Oct. 19	4:00-7:00 PM	John Adams Middle School (MC)
Tues. Oct. 20	4:00-7:30 PM	Newman Elementary School (MC)
Thurs. Oct. 22	3:00-6:00 PM	Roosevelt Middle School (MC)
Tues. Oct. 27	4:00-7:30 PM	Clear Creek Elementary (CL)
Mon. Nov. 2	4:00-7:00 PM	Rockwell Community School
Thurs. Nov. 12	4:00-7:30 PM	Ventura Community School

Special Clinic Hours: The clinic will open early that first week: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM.

Regular Clinic Hours: Beginning Mon. Sept. 28, the clinic will resume normal business hours: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM. The clinic is closed from 12:00-12:30 for lunch. Medicare covers the cost of the vaccine. Public Health will bill Medicare for you as long as you bring your Medicare card.

No appointment needed. Walk-ins are welcome!

Vaccine Price and Options: Seasonal flu shot (ages 6 months & older): \$22
FluMist nasal spray (ages 2-49) or Thimersol-Free Flu Shot (age 3 and older): \$25



Cerro Gordo County
Department of Public Health

