

Rochester School Department H1N1 update

I have listed below the recommendations from the CDC on preparation for the H1N1 virus during the next school year. The recommendations change on a regular basis. We will be closely monitoring the situation throughout the school year. You can check for updates on the blog at www.rochesterschools.com.

We have new hand sanitizers in cafeterias, locker rooms and nurse's rooms for the start of Fall classes. We will also emphasize hand washing with all students during this school year.

CDC Guidance for State and Local Public Health Officials and School Administrators for School (K-12) Responses to Influenza during the 2009-2010 School Year

The guidance is designed to decrease exposure to regular seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu while limiting the disruption of day-to-day activities and the vital learning that goes on in schools. CDC will continue to monitor the situation and update the current guidance as more information is obtained on 2009 H1N1.

About 55 million students and 7 million staff attend the more than 130,000 public and private schools in the United States each day. By implementing these recommendations, schools and health officials can help protect one-fifth of the country's population from flu. Collaboration is essential: CDC, the U.S. Department of Education, state and local public health and education agencies, schools, students, staff, families, businesses, and communities all have active roles to play.

Recommended school responses for the 2009-2010 school year

Under conditions with similar severity as in spring 2009

- **Stay home when sick** Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. They should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs.
- **Separate ill students and staff** Students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness should be sent to a room separate from others until they can be sent home. CDC recommends that they wear a surgical mask, if possible, and that those who care for ill students and staff wear protective gear such as a mask.
- **Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:** The new recommendations emphasize the importance of the basic foundations of influenza prevention: stay home when sick, wash hands frequently with soap and water when possible, and cover noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or a shirt sleeve or elbow if no tissue is available).
- **Routine cleaning:** School staff should routinely clean areas that students and staff touch often with the cleaners they typically use. Special cleaning with bleach and other non-detergent-based cleaners is not necessary.
- **Early treatment of high-risk students and staff:** People at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible. Early treatment with antiviral medications is very important for people at high risk because it can prevent hospitalizations and deaths. People at high risk include those who are pregnant, have asthma or diabetes, have compromised immune systems, or have neuromuscular diseases.