



# JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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## 2009 H1N1 Flu (swine flu): When to Keep Your Child Home from School

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### What are the symptoms of 2009 H1N1 Flu (swine flu)?

Common symptoms include fever, cough and sore throat. Additional symptoms may include headache, tiredness, runny nose, body aches, diarrhea, and vomiting.

### When should I keep my child home from school?

Answer these questions:

1. Does your child have fever (100° Fahrenheit)?
2. Does your child have a cough or sore throat?

If you answered “yes” to both questions, keep your child home from school! Your child might have the flu.

### How long should I keep my child home from school?

Keep your child home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without the use of fever reducing medications.

If you answered “yes” to only one of the questions above, or if your child appears ill with other symptoms, keep your child at home at least one day to observe for other symptoms and until completely well for 24 hours.

### Should I take my child to see a health care provider?

Use the same judgment you would use during a normal flu season. If you would not usually see a health care provider for the symptoms your child has now, you do not need to see a health care provider. Call your health care provider if your child is ill enough that you would normally see a health care provider.

Most people with 2009 H1N1 flu have had mild illness and have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs. However, some people are more likely to get flu complications and they should talk to a health care provider about whether they need to be examined if they get flu symptoms this season. They are:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- People 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- People who have: cancer, blood disorders, chronic heart or lung disease (including asthma), diabetes, kidney disorders, liver disorders, neurological and neuromuscular disorders (including cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy), weakened immune system.

## **How do I protect my children from getting the flu?**

Make sure that your children:

- **Wash hands often with soap and water.** Always wash after coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not nearby, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** with their elbow or a tissue. Throw dirty tissues away and have children wash their hands.
- **Not touch eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs can spread this way.
- **Stay away from people who are sick.**
- **Have you child immunized for both the seasonal flu and the new H1N1 flu.** Both of these vaccines are recommended for all children age 6 months–18 years. The H1N1 flu vaccine is also recommended for young adults age 19-24 years. The seasonal flu vaccine is available through providers clinics and Jefferson County Public Health now, and the H1N1 flu vaccine is expected to be available in mid October.

## **What is H1N1 virus (swine flu)?**

H1N1 virus, also known as “swine flu” and “swine Influenza A” is a virus that spreads from infected people to others through coughs and sneezes. Like the seasonal flu, almost everyone who gets this new virus has had a mild illness. But sometimes people get very sick.

## **Why are health and school officials concerned about H1N1 virus (swine flu)?**

This is an outbreak of new virus. Currently, the illnesses do not seem more severe than the typical seasonal flu, but early on in the outbreak it is important to try and prevent the spread as much as possible in case the illness becomes more severe. Even seasonal flu infections can be severe and should be prevented whenever possible.

## **How can we limit the spread of H1N1 virus (swine flu)?**

The most important thing is to keep sick people away from healthy people. So if your child is sick, you should keep your child home. Staying home when sick stops the spread of the flu and helps the sick person get well. We expect that this new flu virus will be circulating in our community this fall and closing schools is not likely to decrease exposure.

## **Where can I get more information?**

- Washington State department of Health: [www.doh.wa.gov/h1n1/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/h1n1/)
- Jefferson county Public Health: [www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org](http://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org)
- U. S. Department of Health and Human Services: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

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