

ALLEGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

As we enter the new school year and the traditional influenza season, we expect Michigan to continue seeing cases of the new pandemic flu. School and public health officials are working to keep our children safe and healthy. We need your help!

The most important thing you can do is to keep your child home if he or she is ill. If your child is so sick that you would normally seek medical care, please do so. The new pandemic flu is very similar to ordinary seasonal flu. Each morning, parents and caregivers should check their children and other family members for flu symptoms such as fever, cough, or sore throat. A few cases of pandemic influenza have begun with nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea symptoms.

All sick students should stay out of school for at least 24 hours after fever is gone; this must be without use of Tylenol® or Ibuprofen®. Students will likely be home 3-5 days. Ill students should not attend alternative childcare. If a child or adult is ill with other symptoms, they should stay home at least one day to see how the illness develops and until completely well for 24 hours. Children who are ill upon arrival at school or become ill during the school day will be sent home. Children and adults who are ill should stay home and not go into the community unless they need medical care. Notify the school of all flu-like absences and symptoms or confirmed cases of pandemic flu.

At this time, health and school officials are not recommending school closures for individual cases of Novel H1N1 flu. However, as with regular seasonal flu, we might recommend closing schools if larger numbers of students or faculty become ill. In addition to staying home when sick, here are three important things you and your family can do to help stay healthy and keep others safe:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.

More information about the Novel H1N1 flu is available on the following website-
<http://pandemic.gov/>

Thank you for your patience and cooperation during this time. With your help, we can help keep everyone safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

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Health Officer

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Medical Director