

September 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

With the opening of school, the Coxsackie – Athens Central School District would like to update you on the current status of *Novel H1N1 Influenza Virus* (initially called “Swine Flu”).

As with any flu (influenza) virus, including seasonal flu, there is the potential for transmission in our school facilities and other community settings. We would like to remind parents and guardians of the means of transmission and preventative measures which you and your family can take, as well as guidance should someone in your family display flu-like symptoms.

Flu viruses are spread from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze from an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Flu viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or object, and then touches their own mouth or nose before washing their hands.

Public health officials believe that symptoms of H1N1 flu appear 1-7 days after exposure. The symptoms of H1N1 flu in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include:

- Fever (100°F or greater)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

While most of the Novel H1N1 flu cases have been mild, severe illness has occurred from this new flu virus. If you or someone becomes ill and experiences the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care:

In children symptoms that require emergency medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever or worse cough

In adults, symptoms that require emergency medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with a fever or worse cough

The Coxsackie – Athens Central School District will continue to educate students and staff about preventative measures and infection control. Our health office will be working closely with the school physician and will be performing surveillance of flu

cases and reporting to the County Department of Health as appropriate. Our buildings and grounds department will clean surfaces on a scheduled basis, and disinfect objects and surfaces which are commonly touched, such as door knobs.

Families and community members should take the following steps to minimize the spread of the flu virus:

1. Anyone with influenza-like illness should stay home and not attend school, or go into the community, except to seek medical care for at least 7 days, and not before they have been symptom-free for 24 hours.
2. All persons should practice basic flu prevention measures including:
  - a. Coughing and sneezing into tissues, which are promptly disposed of.
  - b. Frequent hand washing with soap and water, or use of hand sanitizers (if soap and water are not available).
3. Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with sick people as much as possible.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth – germs are spread this way.

The Centers for Disease Control has indicated that manufacturers are currently working on vaccines that may help prevent the transmission of H1N1 flu virus, and that these vaccines may be available in the fall to those persons who are determined to be at the greatest risk of exposure to/from the virus. Please look for updates from your healthcare provider with regard to the vaccine.

If you have any questions or concerns with regard to infection control in the school setting, do not hesitate to contact me or a member of our school health office team for more information. You can learn more about H1N1 flu, as well as seasonal flu, at the New York State Department of Health's website at [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us) or visit our school district's website at [www.coxsackie-athens.org](http://www.coxsackie-athens.org).

Sincerely,

Earle S. Gregory, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools