

**Catalina Foothills School District  
H1N1 Influenza Communication  
Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**

**Background**

Last spring, a form of influenza known as H1N1, commonly being called swine flu, prompted school closures in Arizona. Schools may be leading indicators and amplifiers of disease outbreaks, so it is important that educators watch for illness among students and staff and take appropriate measures to prevent the spread of this virus.

In anticipation of another flu season, we want to update you on the efforts being taken to prevent the spread of the illness and to answer some common questions about H1N1 and our response preparedness.

**Q: What precautions are our schools taking now?**

We are reminding students to take common-sense measures to prevent contracting and spreading the flu. First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

**Q: What if a student suspected of having the flu becomes sick at school?**

Our school health personnel have a surveillance system in place to determine if a student or staff member should be referred to their doctor for evaluation.

Students who are suspected of having the flu at school will not be permitted to ride the school bus home. Students with fevers will not be permitted to return to school until 24 hours after they are fever free without the use of fever reducing medications.

Any individual with flu-like symptoms—fever above 100° F accompanied by cough or sore throat—should be referred to a physician for proper evaluation, which if indicated, may include a test for the H1N1 flu virus.

**Q: What if your child shows symptoms of illness at home?**

Flu symptoms include acute respiratory illness, such as a fever greater than 100°F, plus cough or sore throat. Other possible symptoms are runny nose, feeling very lethargic, loss of appetite, and in some cases, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Any individual with flu-like symptoms should be kept home for seven days.

The Pima County Health Department web site is a source of information on cases in our community, [http://www.pimahealth.org/disease/swineflu/swine\\_flu\\_arizona.html](http://www.pimahealth.org/disease/swineflu/swine_flu_arizona.html).

**Q: How will schools be notified if a student or adult is found to have the H1N1 virus?**

The Pima County Health Department will consult immediately with the district if there is a confirmed case of H1N1 flu in our schools. In the event of a confirmed case, the Pima County Health Department is no longer expected to close the school. Although H1N1 is very communicable, the pattern of disease distribution no longer supports closures and the social disruption this creates.

At this time it is felt that school attendance does not pose any greater health risk than any other public activity. The response, however, could vary across Pima County depending on the circumstances.

**Q: If a school closes, are students and staff evacuated immediately?**

No, the closure would occur at the end of the school day. During the closure, the district would stay in touch with local health authorities to determine when to re-open. School closure includes the cessation of routine classroom activities, as well as before- and after-school programs and extracurricular functions.

**Q: How will parents be notified of a school closure?**

The district utilizes a voice and email emergency system to notify families of a closure. Letters will also be sent home to parents advising them of the case of infection and the details of the school closure.

**Q: If a school closes, what is the plan for continuity of instruction?**

In the event of a prolonged school closure, we will, to the extent possible, provide web based lessons and assignments. For some subjects and/or courses the district's textbooks are available online now and accessible to families.

**Resources**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu)

State pandemic influenza plans:

- [www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/states/index.html](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/states/index.html)

Department of Education:

- [www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/pandemic/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/pandemic/index.html)

World health Organization:

- [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

Mayo Clinic:

- [www.mayoclinic.com/health/swine-flu/MY00675](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/swine-flu/MY00675)

# Preventing the Flu

## Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs

CDC Fact Sheet

### **Avoid close contact.**

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

### **Stay home when you are sick.**

Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. Keep sick children at home. You will help prevent others from catching the illness.

### **Cover your mouth and nose.**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. 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.**

Washing your hands and the hands of your children often will help protect you from germs.

### **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

### **Practice other good health habits.**

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

- **If people are ill, they should stay at home and limit contact**  

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**with others, except to seek medical care.**
- **Healthy residents living in these areas should take the everyday preventive actions listed above.**
- **People who live in these areas who develop an illness with fever and respiratory symptoms, such as cough and runny nose, and possibly other symptoms, such as body aches, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, should contact their health care provider. Their health care provider will determine whether influenza testing is needed.**

This fact sheet is located here:

[http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm?s\\_cid=swineFlu\\_outbreak\\_003](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_003)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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