



Placer County Health and Human Services Department

Richard J. Burton, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer and Department Director

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Community Health, Clinics & Animal Services Director

August 17, 2009

Dear Parents of Placer County Students,

The pandemic H1N1 flu virus ("swine flu") is currently active in Placer County and is anticipated to circulate even more during the fall and into next year. This flu is spreading easily from person to person and school-age children are among the groups most affected and most likely to spread the virus. As students return to school this year, the Placer County Health and Human Services Department would like to provide guidance to you on what to do to help protect your child, yourself, and others from catching the H1N1 flu virus.

The following recommendations to reduce the spread of the virus follow those most recently provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- If you or your child is sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities, and limit contact with other people. (The fever should be gone after the use of any fever-reducing medicine has ended.)
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw it away.
- Wash hands **often** with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60% alcohol are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to avoid spreading germs.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (hand holding, hugging, kissing, etc).
- Avoid sharing items such as food, drinks, and lip gloss with others.

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against H1N1 virus. However, a vaccine is currently in production and should be ready this fall. Antiviral drugs may make your flu illness milder and make you feel better faster, and may prevent serious flu complications in some individuals. If you or your child have symptoms of the flu, such as fever with cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, runny or stuffy nose, chills, fatigue, diarrhea or vomiting, contact your health care provider who will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed. Aspirin should not be given to children or teenagers who have the flu because it can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

If you have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, then emergency care is needed. Children should be given emergency care if they are seriously ill with symptoms such as fast breathing or trouble breathing, bluish skin color, not drinking enough fluids (dehydrated), or their flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough, or fever with a rash.

For the most up-to-date information, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services web site, www.flu.gov, Placer County's web site, www.placer.ca.gov, and call the Placer County Flu Telephone Line, 1-530-889-7161.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Richard J. Burton.

Richard J. Burton, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer and Department Director

Handwritten signature of Mark Starr.

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