



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Olympia, Washington 98504

August 2009

**Superintendent of Public Instruction and Secretary of Health
Encourage Families to Help Prevent the Spread of H1N1 Swine Flu**

The health of our children is very important to all of us. You've probably heard about the H1N1 (swine flu) virus that first appeared last spring. It's a public health concern we're taking very seriously. The Washington State Department of Health, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, local health agencies, and school districts around the state are working together to prepare for the potential impact of this new flu on families and schools.

We're tracking and monitoring this new virus very closely, so we're prepared to do everything we can to keep people healthy. As the school year begins, we want to make sure parents and guardians have the information you need to understand and get ready for this upcoming flu season.

One of the most important things you can do to stop the spread of germs is keep children at home if they're sick. Children should stay home from school at least 24 hours after their fever has passed (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).

Things You Can Do to Prevent the Flu

Wash your hands: wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

Cover your cough: cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.

Flu shots: get your family vaccinated for **both** seasonal flu and H1N1 flu (when vaccines are available).

Make a Plan

Plan for childcare at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed. Many families around the country are creating "childcare co-ops" with friends and neighbors. These trusted friends and family work together to share the responsibility of caring for sick children.

If you have children with asthma or other medical conditions that put them at higher risk for the flu, talk to your health care provider now about a plan to protect them during the flu season.

More Information

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction: School planning efforts and current information on dismissals – <http://www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/H1N1Flu.aspx>

Washington State Department of Health: Health information about H1N1 including current information, more on symptoms, and other resources in English and other languages – <http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/>

Local public health: To find information from your local public health agency – <http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm>

We hope these tips help keep you and your family healthy this year!



Randy I. Dorn

State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Mary C. Selecky, Secretary

Washington State Department of Health

