

Frequently Asked Questions for HCPS Staff

Q. – What is a pandemic?

A. – A pandemic is the transmission of infectious disease over a large region or throughout the world. According to the World Health Organization, the United States is experiencing a pandemic regarding the H1N1 virus.

Q. – Do we have a protocol for H1N1?

A. – Yes. We have a procedure for H1N1 that was released on 9/1/09. This procedure may be found on the Henry County Schools website under the heading “H1N1 Flu information.”

Q. – What is the difference between seasonal flu and H1N1 flu?

A. – Typical seasonal flu is seen usually during the winter months and ends around March while H1N1 has been year long. The seasonal flu tends to not infect the school age population while the H1N1 is primarily infecting ages 5-49.

Q. – Should I take a seasonal flu shot, H1N1 flu shot or both?

A. – The CDC has recommended both vaccines based on the following guidelines: The H1N1 vaccine for the following: pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, and people ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems. For seasonal flu – it is recommended that the following groups receive the vaccine: Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday, pregnant women, people 50 years of age and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, people who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, and people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:

Healthcare workers;

Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu; and

Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated).

Q. – Will staff members be offered the H1N1 vaccine?

A. – Yes. As soon as the local Health Department receives the first shipment of the H1N1 vaccine, clinic dates and times will be determined and staff and students will be offered the vaccine at no cost.

Q. – Will I be notified if someone in my class or building has H1N1?

A. – Yes. If a student or staff member has been diagnosed with potential H1N1, you will be notified by your building principal, school nurse and/or faculty meeting.

Q. – How will the school division keep me informed?

A. – Before any release is made to the media, school staff will receive an email with the updated information. You may also view the latest information on the district’s website under the “H1N1 Flu Information” heading.

Q. – What do I do if I get sick?

A. - If you are sick, you may be ill for an extended period of time. You should stay at home and isolate yourself from others for at least 24 hours after your fever subsides and without fever-reducing medication. If you must leave your home, you should wear a face mask to prevent others from being exposed to the virus. You should contact your primary care physician and he/she will prescribe you an antiviral medication if deemed necessary. You should try to drink as many fluids as possible to prevent dehydration.

Q. – What do we need to do about the county’s attendance policy?

A. – If a student is sick and has a fever, he/she needs to stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever subsides and without using a fever-reducing medication. All attendances must be verified so it is important that parents complete a form regarding flu absenteeism.

Q. – Where do I refer a parent who has questions?

A. – Please refer the parent to their primary care physician, the principal, school nurse, school nurse coordinator (634-4753) or the Health Department (638-2311).

Q. – How can I assist a student who misses school?

A. – You can have lessons prepared in advance with assignments ready to send to children to complete while they are recovering at home.

Q. – Are there plans to close schools?

A. – The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has advised school divisions to not close school for communities who have cases of the H1N1 virus. Even though the country is experiencing an H1N1 pandemic, the only reason that school divisions should close school would be the lack of teachers available for instruction

Q. – Who can I call if I have questions?

A. – Please talk with your school nurse or the nursing coordinator at 634-4753.

Please Note

The information provided within this document are for informational purposes only. If you have concerns about your child’s health please contact your primary care provider.

To keep everyone informed information is available on the Henry County Public School System’s web page at www.henry.k12.va.us. Regular updates will be provided as necessary.

H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Protocol 9/1/09

H1N1 (Also known as Swine flu) is a new flu virus causing illness throughout the country. The virus is spreading in the same fashion that the “regular” seasonal flu spreads. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) states the virus is contagious and spreads from person to person through coughing, sneezing and/or touching infected areas. As of today, we have 4 students who have been diagnosed with “swine flu.” Like all communicable diseases (chicken pox, measles, MRSA, etc.), we report the information to the Epidemiologist at the Health Department.

Symptoms for H1N1 include fever, chills, sore throat, headache, running or stuffy nose and body aches. A significant number of patients with H1N1 have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

What can you do to protect you and your family from becoming sick with H1N1?

A vaccine for H1N1 is currently in production and will be available for administration in mid October. Henry County Schools personnel are currently working with the Henry-Martinsville Public Health Department to partner in offering students and staff the H1N1 vaccine. The vaccine will be available at no cost to staff and students. This vaccine does **NOT** replace the annual seasonal flu vaccine. Information will be distributed with dates and times of the vaccine clinics and the information will also be posted on the website at www.henry.k12.va.us

Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever has subsided without using fever-reducing medication
- Keep away from others as much as possible to prevent others from becoming sick.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for an extended period of time. A supply of over-the-counter medicines, hand sanitizers, tissues and other related items may be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.

Our schools have implemented these strategies and recommend that parents reinforce these healthy habits at home.

The CDC does not recommend school closing for cases of H1N1 and/or seasonal flu.

For questions or concerns regarding H1N1, please call Sherry M. Vestal, RN – School Nurse Coordinator at 276-634-4753.