

H1N1 Update

Sent to all FCPS Parents, Staff via Keep In Touch 9/30/09

Influenza-related activities continue to be on the upswing with both increased reports of influenza-like illness and the anticipated increase of the novel H1N1 vaccine within the next few weeks. Virginia has reached the classification of “widespread” for flu-like illnesses with 99 percent of all subtype influenza A viruses being reported to CDC as influenza A (H1N1) viruses. FCPS continues to work with Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD) on preventing the transmission of flu.

We continue to urge those with flu-like illness to stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue.

Seasonal Vaccine

Anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting seasonal flu should get vaccinated with a seasonal flu vaccine. Children 6 months and older, pregnant women, adults over 50, caregivers for high-risk people, and anyone with a chronic medical condition should get vaccinated every year.

Novel H1N1 Vaccine

The novel H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine and is needed in addition to the seasonal flu vaccine. The novel H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available in mid-October. The CDC advocates that children and young adults be among the first to receive the vaccine, along with healthcare and medical emergency services personnel. Some of the others on the priority list include pregnant women and people with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes or heart or lung disease, all of whom are at high risk from complications of the H1N1 flu. It is anticipated that many of the healthcare providers who typically offer seasonal flu vaccine also will offer the H1N1 influenza vaccine. It is possible that FCPS schools may be used to disseminate the H1N1 vaccine; plans are still being finalized based on the amount of vaccine received by FCHD.

Videos

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has produced two videos to inform parents, teachers, school administrators, school nurses and other educators of steps they can take to prevent the transmission of H1N1 influenza or seasonal influenza. The videos, “H1N1 for Parents” and “H1N1 for Educators,” are available for viewing on the VDOE H1N1 influenza web site at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/influenza/index.shtml

FCHD Town Hall Meetings

The FCHD will host a series of town hall meetings to answer questions about seasonal flu and H1N1 flu. Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director of Health, will be on hand to answer your questions about pandemic and seasonal influenza. Find out more:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu/town-hall-meetings.htm>

FCPS will continue to provide you with timely information about influenza prevention as this situation develops. Check the Fairfax County Public Schools flu web page at

<http://www.fcps.edu/news/swineflu.htm> or the Fairfax County Health Department web page at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu/swineflu.htm> for more details and resources.