
August 26, 2009

Dear Parents:

As you are aware the H1N1 (swine flu) virus has been a health concern for many months. This virus has been shown to affect school age children more than others and now that the new school year is underway, there is concern that the number of cases will increase. Doctors are no longer testing every case specifically for H1N1, so we may have confirmed cases of flu, but not know if it is seasonal or H1N1. All students and staff with flu like symptoms or a confirmed case of flu will be treated as though they have H1N1.

We at Mill Springs Academy are committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for your child and are aware that prevention is our best defense against any infectious disease. We would like to provide you with some information about the H1N1 flu and share with you what we, are doing to prevent not only influenza, but other infectious diseases as well. You can find additional information at www.millsprings.org, www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu and www.flu.gov as well as numerous other websites. We are continually monitoring the progress of the flu and receive updates from CDE and Flu.Gov. as they come out. We will keep you updated about the impact of the flu on our school. If you have questions, feel free to call Robert or Nurse Ann.

What is Novel H1N1 flu (swine flu)?

Novel H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the [World Health Organization](http://www.who.int) (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of novel H1N1 flu was underway.

What are the signs and symptoms of H1N1 flu?

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu virus in people include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Severe illnesses and death has occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus.

What should I do if my child has symptoms of influenza?

Any student experiencing flu like illness should keep away from others, stay home and not return to school until fever-free for 24 hours without medication. If your child is showing signs of serious illness, such as difficulty breathing, bluish or gray skin color, persistent vomiting or diarrhea, unresponsiveness, not waking or not interacting, seek medical attention right away.

Do not administer Aspirin or aspirin containing products to kids or teens unless told to do so by a physician. Aspirin can cause a serious illness called Reyes Syndrome.

What can we do to prevent the spread of flu or any infectious disease?

At school we teach and encourage students to practice good hygiene, including proper hand washing and good cough and sneeze etiquette. Soap, water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers are available throughout the school. Posters and other classroom aides are used as teaching tools and reminders. Frequently touched and shared surfaces are cleaned throughout the day and thorough cleaning is done at night. Sick students and staff are sent home and asked not to return until fully recovered. Seasonal flu vaccines are offered to staff annually.

As parents you can encourage good hand washing and good cough and sneeze etiquette at home. Keep your children and yourself away from sick people. Keep sick children at home until fully recovered and have been fever-free for 24 hours. Get the flu vaccine annually for you and your child.