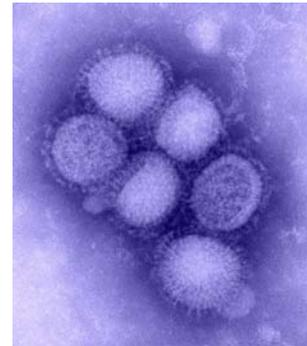


## H1N1 Flu and Schools

Novel H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness both within Kansas and throughout the world. H1N1 flu has been shown to affect school-aged children disproportionately. With nearly one-fifth of the country’s population attending or working in schools, it is very important to implement state and federal recommendations designed to limit disease impacts to this population. Steps taken now will lessen the burden of disease on students and staff later in the fall or winter, and will prevent unnecessary school dismissals. For specific guidance for schools from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) visit: <http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/>.



*The 2009 H1N1  
influenza A virus*

A new H1N1 flu vaccine will be available soon. School populations will be prioritized to get the vaccine as early as possible, and in most Kansas communities school facilities will be recruited as immunization venues. While recognizing that a minimal disruption of school routines may occur because of these efforts, protection offered by vaccines given in school-based clinics will substantially reduce the risk of severe disruptions later due to outbreaks. Now is the time to be in contact with your local health department to collaborate on developing an H1N1 flu vaccine campaign in your schools this fall.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment, together with your local health department, stands ready to help you keep your schools open and functioning normally this year in face of H1N1 flu. For additional information and updated resources, visit <http://www.kdheks.gov/H1N1/index.htm>.

### Preparation Measures for the Start of School

1. Be sure to obtain accurate and current parent or guardian contact numbers for all children and staff members.
2. Revisit cleaning practices and the availability of hand hygiene materials. Be sure all soap dispensers are filled and working, with back-up supplies readily available. To promote respiratory etiquette, ensure adequate supplies of facial tissues in every classroom.
3. Designate a “sick room” in every school for holding potentially contagious children who develop illness at school. Identify a limited number of staff members to supervise and care for children in this room, until they can be taken home.

4. Consider purchasing thermometers and acquiring surgical masks for respiratory protection.
5. Pre-identify students and staff at high risk of severe disease. These include persons with chronic respiratory, cardiac and metabolic diseases, and all pregnant women.
6. Review processes for documenting calls to school reporting ill children and staff and for tracking children who are sent home sick. Identify processes, information captured, responsibilities and capabilities.
7. Work and communicate regularly with your local health department. Determine one primary point of contact.



## **Communicate with Families and Staff Members**

1. Respiratory etiquette and frequent hand washing are most important.
2. Stay home when ill in order to reduce exposures and help schools stay open.
3. If children or staff need to stay home because of illness, it is important to avoid contact with others, except to obtain needed medical care.

## **Steps to Limit Illness**

1. Educate and encourage all students, staff and visitors to cover coughs and sneezes.
2. Encourage and reinforce good hand hygiene. Ensure that students and staff have time to wash their hands, with all needed supplies.
3. Send sick students and staff members home. All ill persons should remain at home until fever-free for at least 24 hours (without fever-reducing medications).
4. Clean surfaces regularly, with ordinary detergent cleansers.
5. Use the designated “sick room” for temporary relocation of ill children or staff members. Provide surgical masks for sick persons to wear, if they can tolerate it, to reduce the spread of infectious droplets while they are waiting to go home.
6. Encourage students and staff members with underlying medical conditions to seek early medical advice if they become ill.

