

TO: Teaching Parents

FROM: People Places

RE: H1N1 Flu Virus

We all have been hearing about the likelihood that the H1N1 “Swine Flu” virus will hit hard this Fall and Winter. People Places urges all Teaching Parents and staff to take precautions against this novel form of influenza, which has spread around the globe. In North America, it was first detected in April 2009. With the beginning of school and the advent of flu season, it may begin to spread more rapidly in North America. While the majority of U.S. cases to date have been relatively mild, and no cases have been reported at People Places, the H1N1 flu can in some cases be serious, resulting in hospitalization or death. Because there is virtually no immunity to this flu within the population, we should be exceptionally vigilant in preventing its spread.

If you or your child gets sick, what should you do?

Indications of flu infection include a fever of over 100° F *plus* a cough and/or sore throat and/or vomiting or diarrhea. It is important both to care for the sick person and to avoid spreading the infection to others. That means, stay home – if you are ill yourself, or if your child is ill and needs care. The current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendation is for flu sufferers to stay home for at least 24 hours after fever has gone away. If you or your child does fall ill, contact your physician or the Health Center by telephone before seeking medical attention to ask for advice on how to minimize possible exposure to others in the health care setting.

In most cases, if flu symptoms begin at night, it is safe to wait until morning to seek medical attention. However, if symptoms are severe, you should seek medical attention immediately.

Because it is so important to contain any H1N1 infection, People Places offices cannot serve as a backup in case your child is ill. If your child does contract H1N1, we know you will treat the child as your own and provide direct care for the child at home. We do urge you to consider now how to manage such an eventuality so that you have a plan in place should you, your child or others in your family become ill.

Emergency warning signs that you/your child need urgent medical attention:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

What everyone should do to lower risk of infection:

- Carry a small bottle of alcohol-based hand sanitizer with you, and refill as necessary from an economically-priced larger bottle.

- Keep a supply of sanitizing wipes on hand and clean frequently-touched surfaces like door knobs and light switches.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 30 seconds — as long as it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” to yourself. (When that’s not available, use hand sanitizer gel.)
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, and mouth.
- If you cough or sneeze, do so into a tissue and then throw it away. If you don’t have a tissue, use the elbow of your sleeve and not your hand.
- Sanitize frequently-touched surfaces like door handles and light switches.
- In areas where there have been confirmed cases, avoid close contact (including hugs and handshakes) with others, as people can be contagious before they feel sick.

For More Information

The Centers for Disease Control provides the most detailed and up-to-date information: [Centers for Disease Control](#)

The Virginia Department of Health posts information specific to Virginia: [Virginia Department of Health](#)

The World Health Organization monitors the outbreak on a global scale: [World Health Organization](#)

Let Us Know

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact your Family Consultant who will attempt to help you find answers and consider how best to plan for the possibility of flu infection. If in the months ahead you or anyone in your family falls ill with the H1N1 influenza, please let us know. We will do our best to help you and your family cope.