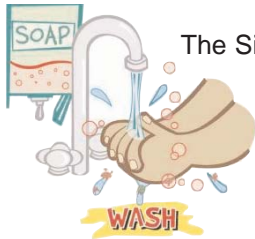




Flu Season Continues Answering Your Questions

Issued November 3, 2009



The Simcoe County District School Board knows parents have a variety of questions as our communities experience a different kind of flu season. We hope you find the following answers helpful.

Simcoe County and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. We also receive direction and information from the provincial Medical Officer of Health and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

Q. Is there a way I can assess my child's flu-like symptoms on-line?

A. The Ministry has provided a 'flu self assessment tool' at: www.health.gov.on.ca. Click on the "H1N1 Flu Virus" information button.

Q. What can be done to avoid getting the flu?

A. In addition to getting the pH1N1 vaccine, everyone should continue to practice basic infection control such as hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when ill.

Q. Where can people get the pH1N1 vaccine?

A. pH1N1 vaccination clinics are listed at: www.simcoemuskokahealth.org and click on the "H1N1 Flu Clinics" links.

Q. Can I find out if students or staff are away because of pH1N1?

A. Student or staff absence information is confidential. Generally, if you have questions about symptoms or risks associated with influenza, please visit the Health Unit's website www.simcoemuskokahealth.org, call

the Health unit at (705)721-7520 ext. 8809, contact your health care provider or call TeleHealth at 1-866-797-0000.

Q. Can I send hand sanitizer for use by my child?

A. Yes, if it is only for the personal use of the child. It is your responsibility to ensure the child is old enough to be given the hand sanitizer, and to review appropriate use. Please do not send scented products.

Q. My child is not ill but I want to keep her/him home as a precaution. Is this a good idea?

A. It is our expectation that healthy children are at school. Influenza is a community acquired infection, so avoiding settings, like schools, will not reduce the risk of exposure.

Q. What if my child gets sick at school?

A. Generally, if a student feels ill at school, the student will be taken to the office or another appropriate area and you will be called to pick up your child.

Q: What is H1N1 Flu?

A. H1N1 flu—which has also been called swine flu—is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to regular seasonal flu. In Ontario, the majority of cases of H1N1 flu have been reported in healthy young adults and most cases have been mild. People between 5 and 24 years of age make up a larger proportion of cases compared to other age groups. Younger children are most at risk of getting an infection, likely due to the lack of hand hygiene and proper cough/sneeze etiquette.

Q: What are the signs and symptoms?

A: Flu signs and symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches and joint pain
- Feeling extremely tired
- Runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Lack of appetite



Q: What can I do to reduce the risk of infection and help my family stay healthy?

A: To reduce the risk of infection:

- wash your hands for at least 15 seconds and often with soap and water;
- use hand sanitizer if you can't wash;
- sneeze and cough into your upper sleeve-not your hands-or use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose;
- stay at home if you are ill;
- speak to your health care provider about flu immunization; and
- see your health care provider if you or your child are experiencing severe influenza-like symptoms.

Q. How does the board make decisions about what needs to be done about pH1N1?

A. pH1N1 is a health issue and as such, the Simcoe County District School Board takes its direction from our local health officials, the Medical Officer of Health for

General Information About H1N1

For more information, please consult the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org. For general information, call "Your Health Connection" at (705) 721-7520 or toll free at 1-877-721-7520 Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.