



Date: 9/11/2009

Dear Parent: The Cole County Health Department has been working with area health providers and schools to clear up some important issues regarding H1N1 (also known as Swine Flu). The following information is subject to change as CDC guidance evolves.

Exclusionary Procedures

Those with influenza-like-illness (a temperature of 100° F or greater and a cough and/or sore throat) should remain at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, such as Tylenol, Advil, or Motrin. Until their illness has ended, it is important for sick students to stay at home and avoid contact with others. CDC recommends this regardless of whether or not antiviral medications are used. In most instances, a doctor's note should not be needed to return to school (check with your individual school's policy for more details).

When Not to Seek Medical Attention

In agreement with CDC recommendations, most pediatricians and family physicians advise NOT seeing patients with uncomplicated influenza-like illness who are previously healthy and are older than age 5 years.

Most patients who develop influenza can be managed at home with treatment consisting of rest, fluids, and anti-fever medication. Most patients will not require medical attention. Normally, the fever will last 2-3 days, the runny or stuffy nose 1-2 weeks and the cough 2-3 weeks. For more information on taking care of a sick person in your home visit:
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm

When to see Family Physicians and Pediatricians

1. Patients with flu symptoms AND are less than 5 years old with onset of symptoms within the last 48 hours.
2. Patients of any age with flu symptoms that have chronic medical problems such as heart defects, neurologic problems, asthma, diabetes, kidney disease or cancer.
3. Patients that look or act very sick, such as when their breathing becomes difficult or fast or causes retractions (sucking between the ribs) or dehydration occurs (no urine output for 12 hours, dry mouth, no tears).
4. Patients complaining of earache or sinus pain, fever greater than 100 degrees lasting more than 3 days, mild cough lasting more than 3 weeks or if your child looks worse to you.

When to Seek Emergency Care

The CDC recommends that medical care should be sought right away if the sick person at home:

1. has difficulty breathing or chest pain
2. has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
3. is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
4. has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry
5. has acute seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions)

Medications to Help Lessen Symptoms of the Flu

The use of antiviral medications is at the discretion of your physician. Antiviral medications can sometimes help lessen influenza symptoms. However, most people do not need these antiviral drugs to fully recover from the flu. The CDC has stated that treatment is not necessary for persons who are not at higher risk for complications or do not require hospitalization. **Children under five are included as a group with a higher risk of complications.**

Testing for H1N1 (Swine Flu)

If your child is seen for an office visit, the physician will decide if influenza A & B testing is appropriate for your child's care. The specific test for novel H1N1 is not readily available. However, 98% of positive influenza A tests that have been further tested by the CDC are positive for H1N1. Your physician will examine your child, evaluate risk factors for increased severity of illness and review expert recommendations before deciding on a plan of care for your child.

Receipt of the H1N1 vaccine, different from the seasonal flu vaccine, is anticipated to occur in late October. If you have any questions about H1N1 you may either visit www.colehealth.org or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> or call the health department at 636-2181.