

District Reminds Parents About H1N1 Procedures

With school in session, the school district would like to remind parents and students about the procedures the district has in place concerning the H1N1 virus (previously called Swine Flu).

According to the most recent advisory from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a school closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case. In all events, the school district works closely with the Chautauqua County Health Department.

The Health Department Recommends:

- Students, faculty, or staff with influenza-like illness need to stay home and not attend school or go into the community until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication. The recommendation of being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication before returning to school is the same recommendation given for other communicable illnesses.
- Symptoms most indicative of the flu are fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (or higher) with sore throat and/or cough.
- Individuals with flu-like symptoms who are at higher risk of complications from flu need to get a medical evaluation as soon as possible.

What can parents do to assist the schools with this plan?

- Monitor your school-aged children every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.
- Notify the school if a student is home with influenza-like symptoms.
- Update emergency contact information and have a plan for picking up students quickly if they become ill while at school.
- Ill students should not attend alternative childcare, activities outside of school such as extracurricular sports or clubs, and should avoid all settings where the public may congregate such as libraries, malls, and church.
- Encourage children to follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.
- Discourage your child from sharing personal items such as forks, spoons, water bottles, toothbrushes and towels. Remind them to keep hands away from their face.
- Frequently clean shared spaces such as phone receivers, keyboards, steering wheels, etc.
- Have your child vaccinated when the vaccine becomes available. Communication with your family MD regarding this important preventative measure is essential.

What is the school district doing to lessen the spread of H1N1?

- We receive continuous updates on the guidance given to schools from the Centers for Disease Control and the NYS Department of Health. These guidelines currently recommend schools isolate ill students and staff until they can be transported home. The guidelines also state that we may ask an ill person, to wear a mask as tolerated, until they are picked up from school.
- We daily monitor the number of students absent due to illness and any that report to have H1N1 symptoms.
- We consulted with the Chautauqua County Health Department for guidance on communicating additional information to parents regarding a communicable illness.
- We are reminding staff to reinforce and model hygiene measures that will decrease the potential spread as described above.
- Teachers and School Nurses are educating students regarding proper health habits.
- Posters with flu facts and reminders regarding flu prevention behaviors will be posted throughout the school buildings.
- We have provided every classroom with hand sanitizer.
- We are cleaning hard surfaces, such as doorknobs, more frequently.
- We are updating this information as needed.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 influenza?

Influenza-like illness is defined as a fever over 100° F and a cough or sore throat. Many people also experience vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fatigue, and muscle aches. In some cases a runny nose or congestion may also be present. H1N1 has the same symptoms as any influenza-like illness.

Thank you for partnering with us to keep illness from spreading. Further information will be provided as the situation warrants. By working closely together we can help maintain the health of all members of the Bemus Point Central School District Community.