



Date: August 28, 2009

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Dr. Rhonda Medows, Commissioner, DCH

SUBJECT: Influenza Like Illness and novel H1N1 School Guidance

Georgia Department of Community Health Guidance

With respect to state guidance concerning students or staff suffering from influenza like illnesses (ILI), please beware of the following:

- Children with influenza symptoms including fever should remain at home for at least 24 hours after the fever has resolved without the use for fever reducing medicines like tylenol or ibuprofen.
- Children with influenza symptoms but without fever should be assessed individually. We recommend erring on the side of caution when determining if the sick child or employee should remain home.
- Children or employees with known conditions such as seasonal allergies, asthma, etc. who have no new symptoms suggesting influenza should not be excluded from school.
- Fever is one of several symptoms associated with influenza and is one measurable indicator of illness. However, fever itself does not cause infectivity. Transmission of viral illnesses may occur through infected droplets during coughing or sneezing even in people who do not have fever.
- The severity of the novel H1N1 influenza now remains mild to moderate. Should the severity of the viral illness increase, the recommendations to schools on this issue will be reviewed and revised.

To read CDC school guidance visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/schoolguidance.htm>. Topics covered include:

- additional measures that local health and education officials may elect to implement;
- individuals with influenza without fever;
- active screening for illness;
- separating ill students and staff; and
- steps that may be taken the severity increases.

Other CDC Guidance that may be helpful include:

CDC Guidance: *Novel H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) and You*

<http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>

How does novel H1N1 virus spread?

Spread of novel H1N1 virus is thought to occur in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something – such as a surface or object – with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

How long can an infected person spread this virus to others?

People infected with seasonal and novel H1N1 flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems and in people infected with the new H1N1 virus.

CDC Guidance: *What To Do If You Get Flu-Like Symptoms*

<http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm>

Avoid Contact With Others

If you are sick, you may be ill for a week or longer. You should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel and not going to work or school, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.) If you leave the house to seek medical care, wear a facemask, if available and tolerable, and cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. In general, you should avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness, especially people at increased risk of severe illness from influenza. With seasonal flu, people may be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods. People infected with the novel H1N1 are likely to have similar patterns of infectiousness as with seasonal flu.