

November 12, 2009

Dear Staff/Students/Parents/Guardians:

Thank you for your continued support and patience in our effort to stay as informed as possible with the H1N1 flu situation.

The Columbia County Health Department is preparing to vaccinate the children in Columbia County schools, as H1N1 vaccine becomes available.

H1N1 influenza is similar to regular seasonal flu; it is the suddenness of the fever over 100° and at least one or more of the other symptoms below that indicates the possibility that you may actually have the virus.

H1N1 influenza symptoms:

- fever, over 100°
- lethargy (lack of energy),
- lack of appetite, and
- coughing

Some people with novel H1N1 flu have also reported:

- runny nose,
- sore throat,
- nausea,
- vomiting, and
- diarrhea

While we are all waiting to be vaccinated, students, staff, and their families are encouraged to take personal responsibility for helping to slow the spread of the virus by practicing these steps to keep from getting sick with flu and protecting others from getting the flu.

Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.

Stay home if you or your child is sick for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with other.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

John F. Howe
Superintendent of Schools