



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
48TH FIGHTER WING (USAFE)

14 October 2009

Dear Educators:

First, we want to commend teachers, parents, and administrators for the tremendous job you have done to address the challenges you have faced as a result of the H1N1 flu outbreak, particularly balancing health and safety requirements with the educational, business, and social needs of the community. We appreciate your efforts and will continue to work together to keep our students and local communities safe.

Most people who become infected with the H1N1 influenza virus developed non-specific symptoms which are also commonly seen with many other (non-influenza) viral infections. Collectively, these are called "Influenza-like illnesses". Common symptoms include: fever, stuffy or runny nose, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, headaches, vomiting, and diarrhea.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people with influenza-like illnesses remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8°C]), or free of signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Unless a complication develops, no additional isolation is necessary. Furthermore, CDC recommends that when people who have had influenza-like illnesses return to work, school, or other community settings they should continue to practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.

The majority of children who develop an influenza-like illness can be cared for at home and do not require a medical evaluation by or clearance from a medical provider prior to returning to school. Once these children have gone 24 hours without fever, they should be allowed to return to school with recommendations to exercise proper cough etiquette and hand hygiene.

Children with influenza-like illnesses should be referred for a medical evaluation if any of the following exist:

- Serious chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, chronic immune deficiencies, serious neuromuscular conditions, congenital heart disease.
- Trouble breathing or persistent rapid breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids to make urine
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or interacting as usual (more than fatigue and increased sleeping)
- Being so irritable that your child does not even want to be held
- Fever returns after being absent for a day

To prevent the spread of influenza-like illnesses please continue to encourage all children to exercise proper cough etiquette and hand hygiene. In addition, we strongly recommend that all children receive both the annual influenza vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine as soon as it is available.

Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions at 226-8714 or shayne.stokes@lakenheath.af.mil.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shayne C. Stokes".

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