

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY
Public Health Services
Healthy Future

P.O. Box 2009 • 1601 East Hazelton Ave. • Stockton, CA 95201-2009
phone (209) 468.3411 • fax (209) 468.3823 • www.sjcphs.org

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To: Parents of Students
San Joaquin County Schools

From: Karen Furst M.D., Health Officer *KF, MD*
San Joaquin County Public Health Services

Influenza (flu) season is just around the corner. However this year there is a new type of influenza virus called "H1N1 influenza" that is already beginning to spread in our community. San Joaquin County Public Health Services is working very closely with school districts countywide to reduce the spread of these flu viruses.

Symptoms: The influenza viruses all have similar signs and symptoms that parents and guardians should be aware of. These including fever (100 degrees or higher), cough, sore throat, tiredness, body aches, muscle aches, headache, and in some cases nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Prevention: We are asking parents to take the following steps to prevent the spread of the flu viruses:

- Encouraging hand washing with soap and water or use hand sanitizers.
- Teach your children good respiratory manners by covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or in absence of tissue, sneeze/cough into their shoulder or elbow area.
- Discourage your children from sharing drinks, food or utensils with others.

Stay home when sick: It is important for parents to keep children home from school when they are sick. In most cases, sick children will need to **stay at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever** and have stopped taking medication for fever or flu symptoms. **This may require students to stay home at least 3-5 days.** Keeping children with a fever at home will help to prevent further spread of the flu to others. Please note that any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home.

Flu Vaccinations: I strongly urge you to get your child vaccinated against both seasonal flu and the H1N1 influenza. For most school age children, flu mist is available. For children who have medical issues, such as asthma, diabetes, or who are immunocompromised, the flu shot is recommended. Seasonal flu

vaccine will be available sometime in September. The H1N1 flu vaccine is expected to be available in late October and will require two shots a few weeks apart.

With both types of influenza children are at greater risk for severe disease. These vaccines are an important step in protecting them from getting infected. Please speak to your health care provider about flu vaccines for your child.

For more information, you may visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website at www.cdc.gov/flu or call the state hotline at 888-865-0564

Let's work together to protect our children from influenza.