



September 28, 2009

Dear Parents,

As expected, Swine Flu H1N1 has spread to Washington State. While we are not aware of any cases in Centralia we are preparing for our flu and cold season as we do each year. Last spring, County Health Officers took precautionary measures by closing schools for 1-7 days, in King, Pierce and Snohomish County. Here in Lewis County, our Health Officer is Rachel C. Wood, MD, MPH. It is Dr. Wood's responsibility to make the decision to close a school or schools within our county if there is an outbreak of H1N1 influenza. District staff would follow her instructions and work closely with all health department officials until the flu outbreak is over. Meanwhile, there are many ways to protect your family from getting sick:

- ✓ Teach your children to wash hands often with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds.
- ✓ Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or cough into the inside of their elbow. Flu germs can enter the body via the nose, eyes or mouth.
- ✓ Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- ✓ Keep children who are sick home from school. They would avoid others until they are better. Adults who are ill should also stay home from work.
- ✓ Report school absences by phoning your local school. Because the Lewis County Health Department is collecting data on "suspected" or "confirmed" cases of influenza, please inform the attendance office if your child is experiencing flu symptoms – fever 100 degrees or above coupled with coughing, running nose, or muscle pain.

The brochure provided with this letter was produced by the Lewis County Public Health Department to help families get ready for a pandemic flu outbreak. If you have questions, you may wish to contact your health care provider. You may contact your school nurse by calling your local school or district office staff at 360-330-7600.

Current information is at your fingertips by calling the Lewis County Health Department at 360-740-1222, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Hotline at 1-800-232-4636, or visiting the website <http://www/doh/wa/gov/swineflu>.

By keeping informed and working together, we should be able to keep our Centralia school district families safe and healthy. Taking simple precautions like washing your hands, covering coughs, and avoiding others who are ill are effective ways to fight the spread of influenza.

Sincerely,

John Bash
Assistant Superintendent

John Bash
Assistant Superintendent

Steven Bodnar, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Steve Warren, Director
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