

Dear Parent

As most of you know, there has been much discussion surrounding the upcoming flu season, particularly flu caused by the H1N1 virus (formerly known as “swine flu”). H1N1 infection is concerning, but people should not panic.

Vaccines for H1N1 are being produced. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) expects the H1N1 vaccine to become available this fall, perhaps as early as mid-October. The Highland County Health Department will be updating the Superintendent as information regarding H1N1 flu and vaccine become available.

However, there are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza (flu).

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Wash hands immediately after coughing or sneezing. If a tissue is not readily available, coughing into one’s arm or sleeve is recommended, **DO NOT COUGH OR SNEEZE INTO YOUR HANDS.**
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Wash hands vigorously for 15- 20 seconds. If soap and water not available, use a hand sanitizer that includes at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with people that are sick.
- Stay home if you or your child is sick with flu-like illness. The CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine)
- Keep yourself informed. Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds, and other social-distancing measures.

For more information you may visit the Centers For Disease Control website at: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ or the Ohio Department of Health website at: www.odh.ohio.gov .

Sincerely,

James R. Vanzant, DVM
Health Commissioner
Highland County Health Department