



# COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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John Jansen  
Department of Human Services

Frank G. Matteo, Director  
Division of Health  
8600 Sheridan Road, Suite 600  
Kenosha WI 53143-6515  
Phone: (262) 605-6700  
Fax: (262) 605-6715

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cynthia Johnson, Director of Nursing  
Telephone: (262) 605-6760  
Email: [chjohnso@co.kenosha.wi.us](mailto:chjohnso@co.kenosha.wi.us)

## **LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS RECOMMEND ILL CHILDREN STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL**

### *Recommendation Comes After New CDC Guidance on School Closures*

Kenosha – May 5, 2009 - The Kenosha County Division of Health, along with the WI Division of Public Health, is urging parents to keep children home from school if they are presenting symptoms of H1N1 (swine flu). This comes after new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends schools focus on early detection of ill students and staff, staying home when ill, and good cough and hand hygiene etiquette instead of closing individual schools based on cases of H1N1.

In the initial stages of the outbreak, cases of H1N1 in the United States included school-aged students and were associated with travel to Mexico and school-based outbreaks. Based on the initial information, CDC recommended consideration of school closures as an option to lessen the risk of infection in order to protect students, staff, parents, and other caregivers from the disease as well as limit spread into the community. New information on the disease severity has warranted revisions to this guidance.

The Kenosha County Division of Health is recommending the following to decrease H1N1 in Kenosha County Schools:

- School closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) and, in general, is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function.
- Schools that were closed based on previous interim CDC guidance related to this outbreak may reopen.
- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days even if symptoms resolve sooner.
- Students, faculty and staff who are still sick 7 days after they become ill should continue to stay home from school until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.

- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.
- Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.
- Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings other than school.
- School administrators should communicate regularly with local public health officials to obtain guidance about reporting of influenza-like illnesses in the school.
- Schools can help serve as a focus for educational activities aimed at promoting ways to reduce the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Students, faculty and staff should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough/sneeze into their sleeve. If a tissue is used, throw it in the trash after use.

Parents are being asked to assist in limiting the spread of H1N1 in our community. The most important thing is to keep sick people away from healthy people. If your child is sick, you must keep your child at home. Staying at home when sick stops the spread of the flu and helps the sick person get well.

Parents are being asked to answer these questions every morning before sending his/her child to school or daycare:

- Does your child have a **fever** (100° F or 37. 7°C)? If you don't have a thermometer, feel your child's skin with your hand. If it is much warmer than usual your child probably has a fever.
- Does your child have a **sore throat, cough, runny nose, body aches, vomiting, or diarrhea?**
- **If you answered "yes" to both questions above**, your child might have the flu. Keep your child home from school for 7 days or until symptoms are gone for 24 hours, whichever is longer.
- **If you checked "yes" to only one of the questions above**, keep your child home from school until symptoms are gone for 24 hours.
- Call your health care provider if your child is ill enough that you would normally see a health care provider. Use the same judgment you would use during normal flu season.

The Kenosha County Division of Health will continue to closely monitor the severity and spread of this H1N1 influenza outbreak.

For more information please contact the Kenosha County Division of Health at (262) 605-6700 or [www.co.kenosha.wi.us/](http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/).

For more information about CDC and H1N1 Flu: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

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