

## A Note from the SRVUSD Health Educators/ School Nurses

Concerns about the flu this season may be heightened due to the influenza virus identified as H1N1. This strain of the influenza virus was first identified in people in April of this year. The flu, whether identified as H1N1 or not, is an illness we can take measures to prevent spreading. The H1N1 virus is spread the same way seasonal flu is spread. Viruses are spread mainly from person to person by coughing or sneezing by people who are sick. Sometimes people can be infected by touching something, such as a surface or object with flu virus on it, then touching their mouth or nose.

Your student may have another illness with symptoms such as a low-grade fever, complaints of sore throat, congestion or cough, or stomach symptoms. These may be viral in nature, but are still contagious. Sending your child to school when ill increases the risk of spreading the infection to other students and staff. If your child becomes ill at school, we will check his/her temperature. A child with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher orally will be sent home.

If your child has been out ill with a fever, please adhere to the following guidelines when deciding if your child is well enough to return to school:

- A fever is defined as an oral temperature of 100 degrees or an axillary (armpit) temperature of 99 degrees. A fever is lowest in the morning hours, begins to increase in the afternoon, and is at its highest in the evening. When a child begins to recover, the temperature could be normal in the morning, but may still be present in the afternoon.
- The presence of other symptoms warrants keeping your child home an additional day. These include: coughing, nasal congestion, low energy level, vomiting, diarrhea or stomachache.

Preventative measures we can take to minimize the transmission of germs are:

1. **Handwashing**- Use soap and water and wash for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with tissues (or into the crook of your elbow) when coughing or sneezing.
3. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
4. **Avoid sharing** drinks, water bottles, silverware, and pencils.
5. **If you are sick, stay home!**

**If you become sick, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever has gone.** This means you should be fever-free without the use of fever reducing medicines such as Tylenol or Advil/Motrin/ Ibuprofen for 24 hours **before** you return to school.

If you see your doctor for flu symptoms, an antiviral medication may be prescribed (TAMIFLU); however this must be taken within the first 24-48 of the onset of illness. Another preventative measure against the flu is getting a flu vaccine. Maintain good hygiene practices as noted above. Rest and drink plenty of fluids.

**In our busy and sometimes stressful lives, remember the benefits of a good night's sleep and healthy meals!**

Keep washing your hands and stay well.

