



September 21, 2009

Dear BISD Parents,

You may be hearing in the news of increased H1N1 flu numbers in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. At this point in time, our numbers are quite good. We did have some students with reported flu-like illness (fever, cough, sore throat) absent from school last week; yet, our campuses had high attendance rates district-wide.

We are also seeing a number of students with other virus-type symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea) who are being sent home from school by our school nurses.

We are not seeing any alarming trends at this time, but we do expect that our number of absent students will most likely increase. Do we have students with H1N1 flu? Yes. People who attend your church, football practices, karate practices, and those who work with you also possibly have H1N1 now- just as predicted. So the name of the game is prevention! Good hand washing and not touching your nose, mouth and eyes are the best ways to prevent illness until the vaccination is available. (late October) The symptoms of H1N1 flu are still very mild to moderate in most cases and the expectation at this point is that this will continue to be the trend. This chart may help you identify symptoms of colds vs. the flu.

<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Cold</u>	<u>Swine Flu</u>
Fever	Fever is rare with a cold.	Fever is usually present with the flu in up to 80% of all flu cases. A temperature of 100°F or higher for 3 to 4 days is associated with the flu.
Coughing	A hacking, productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A nonproductive (non-mucus producing) cough is usually present with the flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).
Aches	Slight body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	Severe aches and pains are common with the flu.
Stuffy Nose	Stuffy nose is commonly present with a cold and typically resolves spontaneously within a week.	Stuffy nose is not commonly present with the flu.
Chills	Chills are uncommon with a cold.	60% of people who have the flu experience chills.
Tiredness	Tiredness is fairly mild with a cold.	Tiredness is moderate to severe with the flu.
Sneezing	Sneezing is commonly present with a cold.	Sneezing is not common with the flu.
Sudden Symptoms	Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days.	The flu has a rapid onset within 3-6 hours. The flu hits hard and includes sudden symptoms like high fever, aches and pains.
Headache	A headache is fairly uncommon with a cold.	A headache is very common with the flu, present in 80% of flu cases.
Sore Throat	Sore throat is commonly present with a cold.	Sore throat is not commonly present with the flu.
Chest Discomfort	Chest discomfort is mild to moderate with a cold.	Chest discomfort is often severe with the flu.

The CDC guidelines for managing the flu season this fall are slightly different from last spring.

Now:

- Students need to remain home if ill for 24 hours past symptoms without the use of medication. “Remain home” means persons should not congregate with friends, participate in other school or community activities or attend a different day care.
- Most physicians identifying Type A influenza only send specimens off for H1N1 confirmation if there are underlying health problems. Therefore, BISD will not always have confirmation of H1N1 vs. Type A flu. Keep in mind that whether this is H1N1 or seasonal flu (most of it is likely H1N1 right now) the treatment is still the same...stay home, rest, get plenty of fluids and sleep.
- If your child has flu-like symptoms, contact your health care provider. Many physicians are treating these symptoms with antiviral medications but the medication works best if started within 48 hours of onset of symptoms.

The health and safety of our students and staff are very important- please be reassured that we are taking all steps possible to ensure a healthy environment including:

- Increased custodial services and cleaning procedures meeting and exceeding the CDC’s cleaning guidelines for schools. This includes approved disinfectant spray bottles in every instructional room for teacher daily use as well as custodial cleanings each evening.
- Daily surveillance for flu-like illness by the school RN and teachers- monitoring student symptoms carefully, tracking absences daily on campuses, reporting flu-like illnesses weekly to local health department
- Promoting good public health measures (hand washing, how to cough and sneeze properly)and educating our students, staff, and visitors regarding these preventive measures
- Isolating students as much as possible who are at school with symptoms of flu-like illness until they can be picked up by their parents
- Contacting parents as soon as symptoms are discovered
- Maintaining constant contact with the health officials to monitor area trends, and planning of possible vaccination clinics in conjunction with Tarrant County Health Dept, and the City of Burleson.
- Requiring that teachers and other staff who have symptoms stay home until they are free from symptoms for 24 hours without the use of medication

Here is what you can do to help:

- Role model good health habits at home
- Keep your children home when they are sick until all symptoms of illness are gone for at least 24 hours without medication
- Call in your child’s absence to his/her campus. Please inform them of your child’s symptoms.
- Keep the campus informed of changes in contact information
- Read the flu information on the BISD website, and maintain good communication with the campus RN regarding any health issues with your child
- Talk to your health care provider about getting seasonal and H1N1 flu shots.

We will keep you updated on our main website, and please, as always, feel free to call if you have specific questions that we can help with. We appreciate our Burleson ISD parents!

Cathy Marsh, RN
Director of Nursing and Health Services