

Dear BVSD Parents ~

As many of you know, several students and a few staff members in Boulder Valley School District have gotten the flu recently. Public health officials agree that the currently circulating flu (Influenza A) is most likely H1N1, since it is too early for seasonal flu. Officials who were concerned last spring about just how severe the H1N1 virus would prove to be for the general population have found that this novel flu is relatively mild for healthy persons. For that reason, most health providers are no longer testing routinely for this type of flu, as it does not change the treatment.

Following are some tips on how to prevent getting the flu and how to handle it if you or someone in your family get it anyway:

Practice good prevention

- Sleep enough
- Eat nutritious foods
- Drink enough to prevent dehydration, especially water
- Exercise as able
- Practice stress management techniques, such as abdominal breathing or taking breaks
- Avoid crowded places and other ill persons when possible
- Wash your hands frequently, most of the time with soap and water; intermittently with hand sanitizer (follow the bottle directions) when unable to use soap and water. Teach your children the same.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or into a tissue and wash your hands afterward. Teach your children to do the same.

If you get ill with the flu

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve and wash your hands afterward. Teach your children the same.
- Stay home when you are ill and keep your children home if they have flu-like symptoms until they have been 24 hours without fever UNTREATED.
- Please report your child has flu-like symptoms to the school when you call in the absence. They will not be penalized for being out and every school is able to work with you on assignments and keeping up. Let them know what you need.
- If you are called to pick up your student, please have someone authorized to pick them up come as soon as possible. If your student is unable to cover their own coughs and sneezes and is thought to have flu, the health room para-professional may place a paper mask on them until they are in your care, to prevent further spread of the germs. If you do not wish this done for your child, please alert the health room.

Other tips

- If you or your child are higher risk (such as someone with a chronic disease, immunocompromised, pregnant, or around a baby less than six months old in the house), talk with your health provider about what to do if you have flu in your home. Many medical offices are having low risk persons come in only if they have more severe symptoms, but there may be more to do for people who are higher risk.
- Consider getting the seasonal flu ("regular" flu) vaccine, which is available now, and the H1N1 flu vaccine when/if it becomes available in October. Discuss the pros and cons with your health care provider. This may help you and your family stay healthier this school year.

Please check the BVSD website's "Flu News" page often for news about school strategies and updates in preventing the spread of the H1N1 virus. On that page, you will also find links to websites for the Boulder County Public Health, City and County of Broomfield Health and Human Services, Colorado Department of Public Health Education, Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, and other helpful information sources. For people in higher risk populations, please contact your health care provider as soon as possible to discuss what needs to be done if anyone in your household contracts H1N1 flu.

Sincerely,

Susan Rowley, RN, MS, CPNP
BVSD Health Services and Medicaid Coordinator