

# Austin Independent School District



## Bureau of Education Office of Health Services

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We continue to see increasing numbers of students absent due to influenza like illness. Austin ISD is working with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services, local Health Department and Dell Children's Medical Center/Seton Family of Hospitals to monitor the situation closely.

Below is a chart explaining the signs and symptoms seen with the common cold, seasonal influenza and H1N1 flu to help you to determine if your child has a cold or the flu.

### Signs and symptoms of influenza

Symptoms	Common Cold	Seasonal Influenza	H1N1 Influenza
Fever	No/rare	Common/high	Common/high
Malaise	No	Yes	Yes
Muscle pain	No	Yes	Yes
Runny nose	Heavy	Mild	Mild
Cough	No	Common	Common
Sore throat	Mild	Moderate to severe	Moderate to severe
Diarrhea	No	Uncommon	Common

**If your child has a fever of 100.3 or greater, they will need to stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducing medication.**

## What Should You Do If Your Child Gets Sick?

Call your doctor right away if your child gets sick. Antiviral medications used to treat H1N1 flu in some patients work best when started within the first 2 days (48 hours) of getting sick.

- The doctor may start your child on antiviral drugs even after 48 hours when symptoms began, especially if the child has been hospitalized or is at high risk for flu-related complications.
- Children younger than 5 years old and children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, may be [at higher risk for complications from flu](#). Check with your doctor about any special treatment requirements for them.
- A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100.3 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, the child might have a fever if he or she feels warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
  - Children may be given acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever, aches, or pain. Children should not be given aspirin or aspirin containing medication.
  - Keep your sick child at home for [at least 24 hours after the fever is gone](#), except to get medical care.
  - Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants, Pedialyte®) to keep from being dehydrated

## If Your Child has a Chronic Medical Condition, the following is strongly recommended:

- Get the seasonal flu vaccine. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the most common three strains of flu.
- Get the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available in October. A seasonal flu vaccine will not protect you from the new H1N1 flu.
- Take everyday preventive actions; including, frequent hand-washing with soap and water, avoid touching your eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, and avoid close contact with sick people.

## Talking To Children About H1N1

- Educate yourself first. Know the basic facts about H1N1—the symptoms, how it spreads, and how you can help protect yourself and your child from getting sick. Consider following some of these helpful tips:
  - Share information about H1N1 in a calm, reassuring manner. Be careful not to worry children.
  - Limit their exposure to media and adult conversations about H1N1.

- If your children are watching television, try to watch with them or make sure you are available to answer questions about H1N1.
- Use their questions as an opportunity to talk about [what they can do to avoid getting H1N1 flu](#).
- Keep activities as consistent and normal as possible even if your normal routine changes (due to daycare or school closures).
- Be a good example. Show children that you wash your hands frequently with soap and water. When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth or use a tissue then throw the tissue away

Source: [www.Flu.gov](http://www.Flu.gov) September 2009

Austin ISD will continue to do what it takes to keep our schools healthy, safe, and functioning normally. Our goal is to decrease exposure to the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu, while limiting the disruption to learning. If the flu is determined to be more severe than expected, additional measures will be taken to protect students and staff. We will update you with information as we receive it. Please feel free to visit the following websites for additional information:

- [www.austinisd.org](http://www.austinisd.org)
- [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org)
- <http://flu.gov>

If you have any questions, please contact your campus nurse or Tracy Lunoff, Coordinator of Student Health Services at 414-9778 or [tracy.lunoff@austinisd.org](mailto:tracy.lunoff@austinisd.org)