

Dear Parents:

Over the past weeks, you have been hearing much in the state and national news about the new flu (novel H1N1, or swine flu) that has been spreading across the U.S. and into our region since the end of April 2009.

In other parts of the country, some schools where students were ill with H1N1 were closed to try to keep illness from spreading further. On May 5, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) revised its advice on school closing.

At this time, CDC and the Vermont Department of Health have advised that students can — and should — continue to come to school as long as they are not sick and do not have flu symptoms. Flu-like symptoms include: fever (over 100° F), feverishness, cough, sore throat, runny nose or stuffy nose. People may also have other symptoms with H1N1 flu, including body aches, feeling very tired, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea.

What should I do if my child is sick?

Flu spreads easily. If you think your child is getting the flu:

- It's very important that he or she does not go to school or other places where they might make other people sick, such as group child care, after school programs, group events or public places like stores or malls.
- Call your health care provider to talk about your child's symptoms and history. Your health care provider will advise you if you need to bring your child in. It's important to call first.
- When you call school to notify them that your child is sick, please tell the school nurse if he/she has flu-like symptoms.
- Keep your school nurse updated on your child's medical condition.

If your doctor advises you to care for your child at home, you can find a guide on taking care of a sick person at home — and many other resources — at the Health Department's website: www.healthvermont.gov.

Where can I find out more?

The Health Department has a fact sheet on H1N1 in English and other languages, information about how to care for someone at home, and much more on the web at www.healthvermont.gov. Or you can dial 2-1-1 for answers to questions or help finding Vermont services.

Attached is information to help you do a daily check for flu symptoms, take every day actions to keep illness from spreading, and tips for talking with your child about H1N1 (swine flu).