

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## Human Swine Flu Information Sheet

This year it is likely many more people will come down with flu-like illnesses than in recent flu seasons because few people have immunity to the human swine flu virus.

As the number of cases of flu increases, we all need to take steps to minimise the transmission of the virus in school communities as some staff and students are at greater risk of severe illness from flu.

Staff or students who become unwell should stay away from school until they are well to minimise the transmission of the flu.

Any student who identifies that they are unwell, or is displaying flu-like symptoms at school will be sent to a sick-bay area and their parent or carer will be called to take them home.

Please watch carefully for any signs or symptoms of flu-like illness in your child. If they are unwell please do not send them to school until their symptoms have gone.

These symptoms include fever, cough, tiredness, muscle aches, sore throat, chills or shortness of breath.

Some people are more likely to develop severe illness from both seasonal influenza and swine flu. NSW Health advises that this group includes people who:

- Are pregnant (particularly in the second and third trimester)
- Have chronic lung disease (including asthma)
- Are very obese
- Have chronic heart conditions
- Have chronic kidney disease
- Have chronic liver disease
- Have blood disorders (including sickle cell disease)
- Have neurological disorders
- Have metabolic disorders (such as diabetes)
- Have weakened or suppressed immune systems (which may be caused by cancers, medications or HIV/AIDS)
- Are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background (of any age).

If you or your child is in one of these categories, please seek urgent medical attention as soon as symptoms of flu appear because you may need anti-influenza medication and it works best if given early.

The department has policies in place to support schools this flu season. I can assure you that the department will continue to act on all advice received from NSW Health to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff and students.

Additional health information is available from the H1N1 Influenza 09 section of the NSW Health website at: <http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/index.asp>