



## SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

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Dear Parents:

Many of you have heard news reports about Pandemic H1N1 (Swine Flu) in the U.S., in our state and in Southwest Georgia. While we are still learning about this new virus, it has become clear that children and teens are among those most at risk of catching it. Protecting your child's health and safety are top concerns, and working as a team is the most effective approach. Therefore, we want to share information with you about swine flu, how we're responding and what you can do as well. Everyone has a role in protecting themselves, their families and their community.

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to regular seasonal flu and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some infected people have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Most people who get it recover at home in approximately a week, the same as with seasonal flu.

There is no vaccine available yet to protect people from catching Pandemic H1N1. Until a vaccine has been developed, our best course of action is to take steps to prevent the spread of illness in our childcare centers and schools – not just swine flu, but any kind of virus. These are everyday actions you and your children can take to stay healthy:

- Do not send your child to school with a fever. Keep children with flu-like illness at home so they don't infect others.
- Sick children should not return to school or participate in any activities putting them in contact with others until they have been free of fever and other flu-like symptoms for 24 hours.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze (using your sleeve is good). If you use a tissue to cover coughs or sneezes, throw it in the trash after you use it. Teach your children to do the same.
- Avoid giving children aspirin and products that contain aspirin. Aspirin has been linked to Reyes Syndrome.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. Be a good role model for your children.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Have your family – including your children – vaccinated against regular seasonal flu.

People who develop severe illness (high fevers lasting more than three days, difficulty breathing or other serious symptoms) should contact their local healthcare provider immediately. However, people with mild symptoms or people who think they were exposed but don't have any symptoms need not seek medical attention.

Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady
Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth

