

Know what to do about the flu!

Action steps for parents to protect your family this school year

Public health officials recommend four main ways to help keep you and your family from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand cleansers also are effective. Avoid other ways viruses can be easily transmitted, such as sharing personal items (e.g. drinks, food, utensils).
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
- **Keep children at home if they are sick with flu-like illness.** Stay home for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Symptoms of the flu are a fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit) along with symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. A little sniffle is not a reason to stay home, but influenza is! Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- **Get your family vaccinated** for both seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available. Seasonal flu vaccines are available now, and H1N1 flu vaccines are expected to be available to priority groups, including children, beginning in October. Watch for flu clinics at your doctor's office, clinic, pharmacy or elsewhere, and take advantage of them as soon as available. If you are not sure about whether or not you should get the vaccine, call your healthcare provider for advice.

Other recommended steps to prepare for the possibility of flu include: **update your emergency contact information** at your schools; **plan for child care at home** if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed; and **identify if you have family members who are at higher risk** of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season.

For more information:

Eugene School District 4J: www.4j.lane.edu

Oregon flu information: flu.oregon.gov

National flu information: www.flu.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO