



Grant County Health District – Always Working for a Healthier and Safer Grant County

Ephrata Office County Courthouse
PO Box 37, Ephrata, WA 98823
509-754-6060

Moses Lake Office
1038 West Ivy Suite 1, Moses Lake WA 98837
509-766-7960

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

Theresa Fuller, Public Information Officer
509-766-7960 x24

Swine Flu Update for Parents and Caregivers

GRANT COUNTY, WA- Grant County Health District continues to respond to the current outbreak of H1N1, swine variant influenza (“swine flu”). Currently there have been *no* confirmed or probable cases of H1N1 identified in Grant County. However public health officials believe there could be cases already in the Grant County community.

This virus has impacted more people under the age of 18 than any other age group. Public health officials have been in contact with school officials. Grant County Health District is encouraging parents to please follow the instructions of your school officials. If school officials ask that your child remain at home, please follow these recommendations and allow your child to recover at home.

The Health District has recently issued guidance to area schools and child care facilities for responding to this illness. Routine or blanket closures are not being recommended; decisions will be made on a school-by-school basis. In most schools, effort will be focused at keeping ill students and staff out of schools when they are potentially infectious to others. School dismissal and closure decisions will be made through active collaboration between school officials and Public Health.

Parents and caregivers should check all family/household members for influenza symptoms (fever of 100 degrees or greater and a cough or sore throat or any other influenza symptoms). Staff should assess themselves for symptoms. Any students or staff that have a fever of 100 or greater and a cough or sore throat should stay home for at least 7 days, or 24 hours after they have completely recovered, whichever is longer.

Staff or students with other symptoms of illness should stay home for at least one day to observe the course of the illness, and should not return to school or child care until they have been completely well for 24 hours. A few cases of swine flu begin as a gastrointestinal illness.

Students and staff should be screened upon arrival at school. Public health will continue working with schools to develop the screening process. Students and staff who appear ill at arrival or become ill should be promptly isolated and sent home.

Ill persons should stay home and NOT go out into the community except for medical care. Ill students should NOT attend alternative child care.

A healthcare provider might prescribe antivirals to limit the severity and duration of influenza symptoms; this is effective if care is sought within the first 48 hours of illness (call you’re the healthcare provider or facility before showing up).

School authorities may close school, based on many considerations, including public health recommendations. School closures may occur if school functioning becomes seriously disrupted.

Recommendations may change with changes in the outbreak, disease severity and/or its ability to spread.

What to do if your child is sick.

- Unless they need medical attention, ***keep children who are sick at home***, until completely well for at least 24 hours. Children with influenza symptoms should stay home for at least 7 days.
- Have them drink fluids (juice, water, Pedialyte ®).
- Keep your sick child comfortable. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat, and muscle aches, you can use fever-reducing medicines that your doctor recommends based on your child's age. Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Keep tissues close to the sick person and have a trash bag within reach for disposing used tissues.

Parents should follow rules of good hygiene to set an example for children in the home and to protect themselves and those around them.

- ***Clean your hands!*** Wash your hands often and well. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- Use alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers if soap and water are not available.
- ***Cover your mouth and nose*** when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away.
- ***Stay home*** from work or school and away from others if you are sick.
- If you are ill or have health concerns, call your health care provider.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

Washington State Department of Health has set up an H1N1 information line in English and Spanish 888-703-4364.

H1N1 (swine flu) Web Resources

Grant County: www.granthealth.org/SwineFlu.html

Washington State: www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm

United States: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

CDC - Resources for Parents and Caregivers: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents

CDC - Information for Child Care Providers: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childcare.htm

