

Dear BVSD Staff and Parent/Guardian Community,

UPDATED Friday, May 8, 2009:

The following information is provided to the Boulder Valley School District by Boulder County Public Health:

Following is the latest information about H1N1 flu activity. We welcome your questions and comments as we continue to learn from this experience and prepare for future emergencies in our community.

Current Situation is Slowing Down

- The H1N1 influenza virus is proving to be less virulent than originally thought. Currently, the illness appears to be similar to that of the seasonal flu.
- Although the situation appears to be less concerning than originally thought, Public Health will continue to monitor activity and adjust control measures, as necessary.
- CDC has isolated the novel H1N1 flu virus and is working to make a vaccine virus that can be provided to industry, if needed.

We Still Need to Take Steps to Protect Ourselves

It is still important to take steps to protect your health and lessen the spread of this new virus by:

- Staying informed. Visit www.BoulderCountyHealth.org or www.cdc.gov, or call the Colorado HELP line at 1-877-462-2911.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve if tissues aren't available.
- Washing your hands or using alcohol-based hand cleaners often.
- Trying to avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth as much as possible and washing your hands after doing so.
- Trying to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Staying home if you are sick for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer (per CDC guidance as of May 8 for people with H1N1 influenza infection).

History and Science Gave Us Initial Cause for Concern

- The hallmark of influenza viruses is their ability to undergo constant and dramatic change.
- Sometimes flu viruses jump from one species to another and result in a new combination of virus genes. This is what happened with the novel H1N1 flu virus. This particular genetic combination of influenza virus segments has not been recognized before.
- This unrecognized virus, combined with the experience of the brutal influenza pandemic of 1918 where millions of people became ill, caused Public Health to act quickly after reports of hundreds of deaths in Mexico.

What We Can Learn

- Public Health and its medical and emergency partners are prepared to respond to a threat like this one, should it return in a more virulent form.
- Everyone has a responsibility to take preventative measures.
- This is a good opportunity to ensure that families have emergency plans and kits available.
- Because this is a new strain of H1N1 flu, individuals do not have immunity. It is likely that this virus will be here in the fall as flu season starts again, so these personal preventive measures will continue to be important.

Future Updates

Because the situation continues to de-escalate, Boulder County Public Health will not be providing any further daily updates. If the situation changes and it is felt these updates are necessary, we will resume regular updates to you.

Please note that updates are posted on the following websites:

- Boulder County Public Health: www.bouldercounty.org/health
- Colorado: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/epr/h1n1.html>
- CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>