



# County Of Ottawa

## Health Department

**Lisa Stefanovsky, M.Ed.**  
*Health Officer*  
**Paul Heidel, M.D., M.P.H.**  
*Medical Director*

August 27, 2009

Dear Parent,

Because the Influenza A H1N1 (swine flu) virus continues to cause illness and some uncertainty about what the upcoming flu season might bring, we wanted to remind you about the important measures you can take to prevent your child(ren) from contracting the H1N1 virus and share with you the coordinated efforts that we are taking to prevent and respond to H1N1.

Like seasonal flu, Influenza A H1N1 is spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing, or touching an object with the flu virus on it and then touching the nose or mouth. The good news is that the transmission of H1N1 can be prevented. The following practices are recommended to prevent the spread of H1N1 in our community:

**Wash hands often:** Washing hands often with soap and water will help protect against germs. While not a substitution for proper hand washing, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if needed.

**Cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing:** Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inner elbow when coughing or sneezing. This will help prevent others from becoming sick.

**Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth:** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.

**Keep a distance:** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Also sick people should keep a distance from healthy people to prevent the spread.

**Keep children home from school when they are sick:** This will help prevent others from catching the illness.

**Get your children vaccinated.** The seasonal (different from H1N1) influenza vaccination is generally available through physician's office and area pharmacies. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are also preparing a voluntary novel H1N1 vaccination to counter the possibility of a severe flu season. Although this vaccine is not yet available, it is recommended for all people aged 6 months to 24 years, as well as pregnant women and household contacts/caregivers of children younger than six months. The Ottawa County Health Department is working in partnership with the Michigan Department of Community Health and local health providers to assure a coordinated and effective response to the CDC's vaccination recommendations.

As always, if your child has flu-like symptoms that include; fever of over 100 degrees F/37.8 degrees C, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, chills and fatigue, consult your physician and keep your child home from school until s(he) has been fever-free for at least 24 hours. If your child is ill with flu-like illness, the symptoms must be reported immediately to the school attendance office.

Your school district is working closely with the Ottawa County Health Department to monitor the risk and assure fast action in the event that there is a case of Influenza A H1N1. If a case does occur, the health department and your school district will take every precaution to assure your child's safety. Immediate information will be provided if a school closure is necessary.

To obtain additional information and helpful resources, please visit our website at [www.MiOttawa.org/flu](http://www.MiOttawa.org/flu). You may also access our information hotline, at 616-494-5575.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Stefanovsky", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Stefanovsky, M.Ed.  
Health Officer