

### A Message from Pitt County's Health Director regarding 2009 H1N1 Flu Information

Dear PCC Students and Employees:

The Pitt County Health Department continues to work closely with a number of health care providers, schools, colleges, childcare facilities, and others to manage the threat of the 2009 H1N1 flu. Thus far, most of the people who have developed this infection have experienced a mild case of the flu. However, for persons who are at highest risk for complications from the flu, this virus can result in more serious illness, including hospitalization and even death.

The 2009 H1N1 flu is widespread in the United States. Testing for the virus is not generally performed unless a person is hospitalized with a flu-like illness. People who have flu-like symptoms that cannot be attributed to another diagnosis are assumed to have H1N1 flu because it is the most common strain of flu in our community. If cases of the flu are identified in schools, colleges, or other facilities, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend routine closure as a way to control the spread of the virus. However, a facility may require closure if excessive absenteeism occurs and it is unable to continue daily operations. All parents should plan now for how they will care for their children and themselves if they develop a case of the flu and cannot attend school or work.

#### What To Do If You Get The Flu

For most people the illness can be managed with home care, often not even requiring a visit to the doctor or prescription medication. People with mild symptoms are encouraged to:

- Stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Fever reducing medicine may be taken, but fever should be gone for 24 hours after taking the last dose of medicine before going back to school or work.)
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from becoming dehydrated.
- Contact your doctor if symptoms get worse.
- Limit contact with others, and follow recommendations below for handwashing, coughing, and sneezing. This will help reduce the spread of the virus to others.

#### Certain People Should Always Talk With Their Doctor

People with more severe symptoms or persons at highest risk for complications from the flu should contact their doctor. The doctor may choose to prescribe antiviral medication. People who are at high risk for complications from the flu include:

- pregnant women,
- young children,
- children and adults with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease,
- people with weakened immune systems, and
- elderly people.

#### What You Can Do To Stay Healthy

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Flu symptoms include fever, cough, body aches, runny nose, and sore throat. Some people may also experience nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (if you do not have a tissue). Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand gel, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Get the seasonal flu vaccine when it becomes available
- Get the H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available.
- For the latest information on H1N1 flu, visit [www.flu.nc.gov](http://www.flu.nc.gov) or [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu)