



October 20, 2009

Dear Parent,

H1N1 Flu is in our county and area schools.

Remember there are actually 2 flu viruses going around this year. The regular seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu (sometimes called 'swine flu'). Influenza Type A and H1N1 flu are very similar. The majority of cases of both types of influenza recover from illness with no consequences.

We have students from both school buildings with confirmed Type A influenza. In spite of what doctors or others may say, these cases are not confirmed H1N1, although it is highly probable that they are H1N1. The main way to confirm this flu is through testing by the New York State Health Department, which is very costly and time-consuming.

On the backside of this letter is some information that may be helpful for parents. We describe the differences between a cold and the H1N1 flu. We also include suggestions on what you can do as a parent to prevent or deal with this flu. We have also provided a brochure from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for your information.

At school, we are taking extra care to provide hand sanitizers in each classroom, restroom and cafeteria. We are also adding extra cleaning procedures to classrooms that have had infected students.

If the situation becomes more serious, the NYS Health Department will make decisions pertaining to public health and will make recommendations about closing schools. In the meantime we are following the guidelines outlined by the New York State Education Department.

Remember, if your child has any of flu-like symptoms shown on the list, please keep him/her home from school and away from the public until the fever breaks and the child is fever-free for at least 24 hours.

Influenza vaccination clinics are planned for school children in our schools soon. Please check your mail for further information coming soon from the Steuben County Health Department. If you have further questions call the County Health Department or school nurse. You can also get information from our website: [www.cscsd.org](http://www.cscsd.org)

Mr. Lynn Lyndes

## Differences between a Cold and the H1 N1 flu.

<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Cold</u>	<u>H1N1 Flu</u>
Fever	Fever is rare with a cold.	Fever is usually present with the flu in up to 80% of all flu cases. A temperature of 100°F or higher for 3 to 4 days is associated with the flu.
Coughing	A hacking, productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A non-productive (non-mucus producing) cough is usually present with the flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).
Aches	Slight body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	Severe aches and pains are common with the flu.
Stuffy Nose	Stuffy nose is commonly present with a cold and typically resolves spontaneously within a week.	Stuffy nose is not commonly present with the flu.
Chills	Chills are uncommon with a cold.	60% of people who have the flu experience chills.
Tiredness	Tiredness is fairly mild with a cold.	Tiredness is moderate to severe with the flu.
Sneezing	Sneezing is commonly present with a cold.	Sneezing is not common with the flu.
Sudden Symptoms	Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days.	The flu has a rapid onset within 3-6 hours. The flu hits hard and includes sudden symptoms like high fever, aches and pains.
Headache	A headache is fairly uncommon with a cold.	A headache is very common with the flu, present in 80% of flu cases.
Sore Throat	Sore throat is commonly present with a cold.	Sore throat is not commonly present with the flu.
Chest Discomfort	Chest discomfort is mild to moderate with a cold.	Chest discomfort is often severe with the flu.

## What can you do?

- **Sick kids should stay home!** They should NOT go to school, work, or out in public. If you think you have the flu, you should stay home and away from others. Individuals with flu-like symptoms should remain home for at least 24 hours after fever has disappeared (without the use of fever-reducing medication).
- **Practice healthy habits.** Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with a tissue – not your hand. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Wash hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Wash and rub hands for 20 seconds – as long as it takes to sing Happy Birthday twice. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- **Get the seasonal flu vaccine for you and your child.** It won't give protection from H1N1 flu, but seasonal flu is also circulating and can make you just as sick.
- **Get the H1N1 flu vaccination for your child** as soon as it is available. Our school will host a clinic in the next month or so providing free vaccines to all students who want them. More information will be coming to you about this clinic.