

# PREVENTION IS THE KEY

## Keep Our Schools Healthy

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS FALL 2009

### RENSEIGNEMENTS IMPORTANTS

Prière de les faire traduire.

#### 重要資料

請找人為你翻譯

これはたいせつなお知らせです。

どなたかに日本語に訳してもらってください。

#### 알려드립니다

이것을 번역해 주십시오

#### CHỈ DẪN QUAN TRỌNG

Xin nhờ người dịch hộ

#### ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਖ਼ਬਰਾਂ ਹਨ।

#### INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE

Busque alguien que le traduzca.

#### اطلاعات مهم و سودمند

لطفاً از یک نفر بخواهید که برای شما ترجمه کند

#### ITO AY MAHALAGANG IMPORMASYON

Isalin sa wikang tagalog kung hindi maintindihan

#### يرجى ترجمة هذا

معلومات هامة

#### ВАЖНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ

Переведите это, пожалуйста.

This booklet has been prepared by the Burnaby School District using materials provided by British Columbia's Ministry of Health Services, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, and Ministry of Education.

September 15, 2009

## Dear Parents:

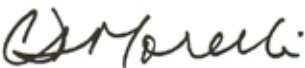
The health and safety of our students and staff in the Burnaby School District is always a priority. As we head back to school with the cold and flu season upon us, we will be focusing on prevention. Staff will be educating students about the everyday actions they can practise to stay healthy. Additionally, signs and posters highlighting prevention tips are being placed throughout our schools.

This booklet outlines the latest information on protecting yourself and your children against H1N1 or any other cold or flu virus. We hope that you will set a good example and practise as a family the prevention measures recommended on page two.

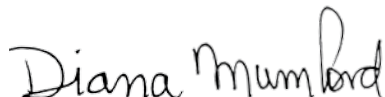
If your child is feeling sick and staying home, please notify the school of their absence. Be sure to keep them home until they fully recover. If your child should get sick at school, you will be called and asked to pick them up as soon as possible.

The School District is monitoring absenteeism and will continue to work closely with Fraser Health Authorities to ensure that the advised preventative measures are in place. Updated health information as it pertains to Burnaby's schools can be found on the district website at **[www.sd41.bc.ca](http://www.sd41.bc.ca)**.

We look forward to a productive, healthy and safe 2009/2010 school year.



Claudio Morelli,  
Superintendent of Schools



Diana Mumford,  
Chair, Board of Education

## PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM THE FLU

Flu viruses spread from person to person mainly through droplets from the coughing or sneezing of a sick person. Flu viruses may also be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with the virus and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth. Teach and practise with your child these everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like the H1N1 flu:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds (as you scrub, sing *Happy Birthday* twice).
- Cover a cough or sneeze with the inside of your elbow or use a tissue and then throw the tissue into the garbage.
- Stay at least two metres (6 feet) away from people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Don't share the same cup or utensils with others.
- If you are sick, stay at home away from others until you are fully recovered and can resume usual activities.

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO WASH YOUR HANDS:

- after coughing and sneezing
- after playing or working outside
- before preparing or eating food
- after using the bathroom
- after playing with animals

**The H1N1 flu vaccine is expected to arrive in BC in December and will be available to everyone.**

## IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE THE H1N1 FLU

In most children, the symptoms of the H1N1 flu virus are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu. They can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills and fatigue
- Occasionally, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Eye pain
- Shortness of breath
- In younger children, a lack of appetite

If your child is sick:

- Keep them at home, unless they need medical attention.
- Have them drink frequent small amounts of liquid (juice, soup, water, Pedialyte®).
- Keep your 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.
- Keep tissues close to your child and have a trash bag within reach for disposing of used tissues.
- Keep your child away from those who are not sick.

If your child experiences any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin colour
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that they do not want to be held
- Not urinating
- No tears when crying
- Symptoms improve but then return with fever and a worse cough

**CALL HEALTHLINK BC AT 8-1-1**

24 hours a day / 7 days a week if you are concerned about any symptoms experienced by you or your child.

## TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT THE H1N1 FLU

News reports can sometimes scare children because they often focus on worst-case situations. You can help ease your family's fears by providing them with accurate information. Here are a few tips for talking to your kids about the H1N1 flu virus:

- Children can come up with stories that are often more frightening than the reality. Initiate the conversation by asking them what they have heard. You can help to reassure them with facts.
- Keep explanations very simple for younger children.
- Assure your children that, while they may be concerned, there is no need to be afraid. The public health service and doctors and nurses are working hard to limit the spread of the flu virus and help people who may become sick.
- You can tell your children that this virus causes a sickness that is a lot like the flu that we see every year, but that more people may get sick because the virus is new.
- Explain that some people have become very sick and have had to go to the hospital but most people get better at home.
- Remind your children that they should tell you if they don't feel well, and that they must stay home from school if they are sick.
- Remind your children of ways to avoid getting sick (see page 2).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Does H1N1 affect everyone the same way?*

The World Health Organization has classified this new strain of H1N1 as a pandemic influenza virus due to its global spread, however they still consider it to be of moderate severity. This means that most people recover at home from symptoms that are not very different than that of seasonal flu.

School-aged children appear to be getting the H1N1 flu more than other influenzas. There are also groups that may be at higher risk for more severe illness or complications. They include children under the age of five, pregnant women and people with chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes or heart disease. Those at high risk should visit their doctor to make a plan for what to do if they become ill with H1N1. This may include a prescription for antivirals to have on hand to use if symptoms appear.

*Should my child use alcohol-based hand sanitizer?*

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should only be used if soap and water is not available. If hands have visible dirt on them then alcohol-based hand sanitizers don't work as well and may not kill the influenza virus.

*If my child is sick with the flu, how long should they be kept away from school?*

Flu and cold viruses are highly contagious. To avoid infecting other students and staff in our school community, your child should stay at home when they are sick. They can return to school when their symptoms are gone and they are fully able to participate in their usual activities.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (Continued)

*Why were some schools closed last year due to H1N1?*

Closures last Spring were done as a precautionary measure because there was very little information on H1N1 at that time. It has since become apparent that, in general, the H1N1 flu virus does not warrant such severe measures.

*Will there be school closures this year and who decides if schools get closed?*

British Columbia's Public Health Officials do not anticipate that closures of individual schools, community-wide closures, or province-wide closures will be useful for controlling the transmission and impact of the H1N1 flu virus.

If there are unusual circumstances that call for a school to be closed, this would be a decision made by the local Medical Health Officer in consultation with the Provincial Health Officer and local school district.

*What can we expect in the coming months?*

Public Health Officials are encouraging students, parents and schools to continue taking practical, common sense steps to prevent the spread of illness. This includes staying at home if sick until fully recovered.

While more people are expected to get sick this Fall, to date, most have recovered at home without having to go to hospital. If required, there are medications available from your doctor. The H1N1 flu vaccine is expected to arrive in BC in December and will be available to everyone who needs or wants it.

# KEEP OUR SCHOOLS HEALTHY



WASH YOUR  
HANDS OFTEN.  
As you scrub,  
sing "Happy Birthday"  
2 times.

COVER COUGHS  
AND SNEEZES  
with the inside of  
your elbow.

STAY HOME  
WHEN SICK  
until you are better.



## CALL HEALTHLINK BC AT 8-1-1

24 hours a day / 7 days a week  
to speak to a nurse if you have more questions  
or are concerned about any illness/symptoms  
experienced by you or your children  
or visit **[www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)**.

Updated health information  
as it pertains to Burnaby schools  
will be posted on the district website  
at **[www.sd41.bc.ca](http://www.sd41.bc.ca)**.

