



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

September 2, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you probably know, the H1N1 flu (previously known as Swine flu) has spread to our community. The Orange County Health Department and your child's school are working to protect your children and reduce the spread of the flu. The H1N1 flu spreads like the seasonal flu we see each year, mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the virus. The virus may also spread by touching contaminated objects and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strongly recommends that children be vaccinated against this virus. When the vaccine is made available, I encourage you to get your child vaccinated. The Orange County Health Department will be offering vaccinations free of charge. The vaccines are voluntary.

You and your children can take steps to reduce the spread of germs and reduce the risk of getting ill. They include:

- **washing your hands frequently**
- **avoiding close contact with people who are sick**
- **covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then washing your hands or cough or sneeze into your elbow to keep germs off your hands**
- **staying home when sick for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100° F or greater), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines (such as Tylenol)**

If anyone in your family experiences symptoms that you believe are flu-related, talk to your doctor or medical care provider. The sooner a person experiencing symptoms receives medical attention, the better. If you would like information on low cost medical services available in Orange County, contact United Way's 24 hour resource and referral helpline by simply dialing 211.

Flu-like symptoms include:

- *Fever (usually high)*
- *Headache*
- *Extreme tiredness*
- *Stomach symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea can occur but are more common in children than adults*
- *Dry cough*
- *Sore throat*
- *Runny or stuffy nose*
- *Muscle aches*

For more information on the H1N1 flu or how you and your family can protect yourself from the spread of germs, call the Florida Department of Health's toll free hotline at 1-877-352-3581 or visit www.orchd.com or www.myflusafety.com.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Sherin, M.D., M.P.H.
Director



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