



8/24/09

To All Parents:

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, steps have to be taken to reduce the spread of flu in Van Wert County. The new flu virus H1N1 continues to circulate and may return this fall potentially bringing the public the worst flu season we have had in many years. Van Wert County residents, including students, school staff, and their families must take personal responsibility for helping to slow the spread of the virus.

To keep from getting sick and spreading flu virus please take these steps, and teach your children to do the same:

- Practice Good Hand Hygiene. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 30 seconds, especially after coughing and sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Practice Respiratory Etiquette. The main way the flu spreads is from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes, so it is important to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick. Keeping sick students at home means that you are keeping their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.

The groups of individuals who are being most commonly infected with H1N1 are the age group from 5-24 years of age. Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems from the flu can happen at any age.

Researchers are developing a vaccine to protect against H1N1, which will be offered in addition to regular, seasonal flu vaccine. Van Wert County Health Department, in conjunction with all the schools in Van Wert County will be providing H1N1 vaccine to students at school based clinics during regular school hours at no charge to you. These clinics tentatively will start early fall. Get your family vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available. There will be more information to follow regarding these clinics. Parent volunteers will be needed to make these clinics possible.

For more information please visit www.flu.gov, www.cdc.gov, or www.nwopandemicflu.org. You can reach the CDC by phone 24 hrs/7days a week at 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636), TTY (888)232-6348. Van Wert County Health Department also has a website: www.vanwertcountyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul A. Kalogerou, MD
Health Commissioner, Van Wert County