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31 August 2009

Dear Parent:

Although the prevalence of H1N1 flu cases in Cayman seems to have leveled off, now that children have returned to school, we are preparing in earnest for any possible surge.

As this is a new and still unpredictable virus, the Public Health Department and the Health and Education ministries met and considered a range of prevention and control strategies to deal with any resurgence or outbreak in schools. Also, health officials are closely monitoring the local situation and are in close contact with all schools. Should anything change, or should we need you to take any specific actions, we will immediately let you know.

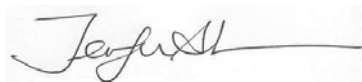
We want to keep schools open and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **We need your help to do this.** School closures will only be considered as a last resort. In large part, we will be following the recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and will take appropriate action as deemed necessary.

Presently our best line of defense is preventing the spread of the H1N1 virus through **social distancing, keeping sick children out of school** and **hand washing**. So as parents you have an important role to play, and we ask you to focus on what you and your child can do to limit the spread of the H1N1 flu.

Please read and keep the leaflet *Five Things You Can Do to Fight the Flu* on the back of this letter. Share this information with your children and other household members.

Let us work together to keep our schools open, and safeguard the health of our children.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Jennifer Ahearn  
Chief Officer  
Ministry of Health



Mrs. Mary Rodrigues  
Chief Officer  
Ministry of Education

**Should you need any more information or advice, contact the 24-hour flu hotline at 926-2812 or email [flu@hsa.ky](mailto:flu@hsa.ky). You can also visit [www.hsa.ky](http://www.hsa.ky), [www.caymanprepared.ky](http://www.caymanprepared.ky) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) .**

# Five Things You Can Do to Fight the Flu

## 1 Know the symptoms of the flu

Flu symptoms include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea. Please note that as the H1N1 flu is occurring worldwide any flu case is now considered to be H1N1.

## 2 Keep sick children home

Keep sick children at home -- please do not send your child to school or daycare. Keep a sick child away from other family members, to prevent the spread of the virus. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the possibility of infecting others.

Children who may have the flu should be kept home until they have been well and fever-free for at least 24 hours -- without using fever-reducing medication.

## Know when to see a doctor

The severity of symptoms will differ from person to person, but you know your child. So don't hesitate to consult your doctor if you are unsure or if symptoms are severe.

Children with chronic medical conditions such as lung diseases, heart problems, cancer or immune deficiencies, and children under five are at risk of getting severely ill when they get the flu.

### You should definitely seek emergency care if your child has:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin colour
- Severe or persistent vomiting

### Also if your child:

- is not drinking enough fluids
- is so irritable that he/she does not want to be held or
- if flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse.

## 3 Promote healthy habits

Let your kids:

- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Rest sufficiently

## 4 Teach your children to make a difference

Teach your children to:

- Catch 'em: Carry tissues and cover coughs and sneezes and if a tissue is not available cover cough with arm.
- Trash 'em: Throw away tissues after one use.
- Wash 'em: Wash hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

Also tell them not to share personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.



## 5 Stay informed!

If you have questions or concerns, call our 24-hour flu hotline at 926-2812 or email [flu@hsa.ky](mailto:flu@hsa.ky) or visit [www.hsa.ky](http://www.hsa.ky) or [www.caymanprepared.gov.ky](http://www.caymanprepared.gov.ky)