



# Flu Information and Preparedness Guide

During the spring, the H1N1 flu virus (also known as swine flu) made headlines in Georgia and around the world. School officials are partnering with Public Health to plan a coordinated response to possible H1N1 infections during the 2009–10 school year. How would it affect our community? How would it affect our schools? Most importantly, how do we prepare?

Pandemic flu is different than a cold or the more familiar seasonal flu. A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of serious illness. Health officials have declared a pandemic due to the H1N1 flu virus.

Should the current flu pandemic become more severe, you may find that basic services such as utilities (electricity, water, natural gas), stores, pharmacies, gas stations, and schools may be sporadic or unavailable. Absenteeism may be extremely high due to illness or the need to take care of ill loved ones. Healthcare providers and Public Health officials are urging individuals to be informed, be prepared, and be ready to follow all recommendations from health officials.

## Additional resources

[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) Information from U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

[www.getreadyforflu.org](http://www.getreadyforflu.org) From the American Public Health Association.

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) Resources from The Advertising Council in partnership with Homeland Security

[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/) Resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.health.state.ga.us/pandemicflu/](http://www.health.state.ga.us/pandemicflu/) Resources from Georgia's Division of Public Health

[www.fema.gov/kids](http://www.fema.gov/kids) A kid-friendly web site from the Federal Emergency Management Agency

[www.eastmetrohealth.com](http://www.eastmetrohealth.com) Resources from local Public Health officials

## Seasonal Flu vs. Pandemic Flu

### Seasonal Flu

- Caused by influenza viruses that are similar to those already circulating among people.
- Symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, and muscle pain. Deaths can be caused by complications such as pneumonia.
- Healthy adults usually are not at risk for serious complications. The very young, the elderly, and those with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk for serious complications.

### Pandemic Flu

- Caused by a new influenza virus that people have not been exposed to before. Likely to be more severe, affect more people, and cause more deaths than seasonal influenza because people will not have immunity to the new virus.
- Symptoms similar to common flu, but more severe, and complications are more serious.
- Healthy adults may be at increased risk for serious complications.

## Communication between Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) and parents and staff

School system officials have been working and will continue working with the Public Health officials to prepare for and, if needed, to respond to any public health crisis. The school system, in consultation with Public Health officials, will work diligently to notify parents and community members about restricted use of facilities, cancellations of extracurricular activities, and possible school closings in response to the flu pandemic. GCPS will make public announcements via the system's web site and TV station, and through local news media.

In addition to taking direction from Public Health officials, the school system will work with the Georgia Department of Education regarding the impact closures will have on the school calendar, testing, and other statewide programs and initiatives.

## What should my family do to prepare?

**Be Aware.** Stay informed about both seasonal and pandemic flu by watching the news, reading newspapers and visiting local, state and federal web sites. (See suggested web sites to the left.)

**Be Prepared.** Preparing now could help during a flu pandemic or other public health emergency.

**Be Healthy.** Be conscious how your choices affect your health. Habits are critical to limiting the spread of disease.

## Stay tuned, be informed

- Tune into **GCPSTV** on these cable network providers:
  - **AT&T**... Check U-Verse Listings;
  - **Charter**... Ch. 22;
  - **Comcast**... Ch. 24 or 26 (digital only)

- Subscribe to **GCPS' e-mail newsletter** on the web site.
- Visit our **web site** at [www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us](http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us)

**Be informed.  
Be prepared.  
Be healthy.**



# Healthy Habits

## Staying healthy during cold and flu season

These tips are good to follow during the typical flu season and will help you stay healthy if a more virulent or dangerous flu emerges in the community.

- Keep your distance. Avoid close contact, maintaining personal space to avoid getting germs from others or sharing your germs with them.
- Don't share personal items (toothbrushes, towels, utensils, etc.).
- Stay home when you are sick and keep children home from school when they are ill.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow or cover with a tissue. In other words, keep germs off your hands. And put used tissues in a wastebasket. Wash hands after you cough or sneeze.
- Keep "germy" hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Practice good health habits... Get enough sleep, eat a good diet, be physically active, drink plenty of fluids (especially water), manage stress, and get fresh air... every day.
- Make sure your diet is balanced, with lots of fruits and vegetables, especially dark green, red, and yellow vegetables, and a variety of fruits.
- Get flu shots to protect against both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu virus. (H1N1 may require multiple doses.) The CDC strongly recommends flu vaccinations for both children and adults. Vaccine is expected to be available later in the fall.
- Get a pneumonia shot to prevent secondary infection if you are over the age of 65 or have a chronic illness such as diabetes or asthma.

## High fever

High fevers are a flu symptom. The best response varies according to the patient's age and temperature. Contact your physician in cases of high fevers. Typically, doctors recommend using the full recommended dose of a fever-reducing medicine like acetaminophen or ibuprofen to control high fevers. Health officials say to avoid using aspirin in children under the age of 18 due to a rare reaction called Reyes Syndrome.

For very high fevers, such as 103 degrees and above, the most effective treatment is to use fever-reducing medicine. Do not sponge the patient with alcohol or immerse the sick patient in cold water. Both techniques are less effective and can cause other serious problems if the fever drops too quickly. Never attempt to "sweat" the fever out. Rather, keep the patient comfortable with lightweight clothing, sheets, or blankets.



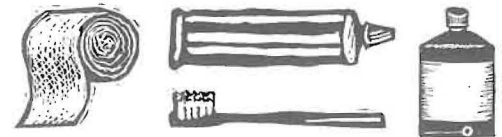
# Useful information to keep on hand.

## Supplies

### What should be stockpiled for an extended stay at home?

Examples of food/non-perishables that officials recommend families have in supply should a pandemic occur:

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| Bottled water<br><i>Plan for one gallon of water for each person for each day, with extra for pets.</i> | Dry cereal/granola/trail mix |
| Ready-to-eat canned food (meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, and broth-based soups)                       | Peanut butter and jelly      |
| Protein, energy, or fruit bars  | Crackers                     |
| Nuts  | Canned juices                |
|   | Dried fruit                  |
|   | Powdered milk                |
|   | Baby formula/baby food       |
|   | Pet food                     |



Examples of medical, health, and emergency supplies:

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| Vitamins   | Rehydrating solutions for babies and small children |
| Prescription medicines filled. <i>Make it a habit to fill any prescriptions several days before you run out.</i> | Tissues, toilet paper, and disposable diapers       |
| Prescribed medical supplies  | Manual can opener                                   |
| Non-aspirin medicines for fever (acetaminophen or ibuprofen)   | Flashlight, portable radio, and batteries           |
| Thermometer  | Trash bags  |
| Personal protection supplies (gloves, face masks, etc.)  | Soap or alcohol-based hand wash                     |
| Anti-diarrheal medication  | Disposable plates, bowls, and eating utensils       |
| Sports drinks  | Bleach  |
|  | Paper Towels  |

Prepared by GCPS' Pandemic Flu Committee (July 2009 update)

