



PETER A. KURZBERG, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

## BRAINTREE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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November 5, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to keep you updated regarding seasonal and H1N1 influenza. Currently we are seeing scattered incidents of students exhibiting symptoms of influenza like illness (ILI) at all of our schools. We have also some students diagnosed with either Influenza A or with symptoms commonly associated with influenza by their physician. Since the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is no longer conducting routine testing for H1N1, and no cases of seasonal flu cases have been diagnosed, it is felt that all influenza cases circulating at this time are probable cases of H1N1. The symptoms of H1N1 and seasonal flu are very similar. They include a temperature  $\geq 100.4$  F with a cough and/or sore throat. Other symptoms include body aches, runny nose, headache, chills and/or fatigue. In order for us to accurately track cases of ILI, we request that you notify the school nurse if your child is absent with flu like symptoms. With that said, what can you do to protect yourself and your child?

- Get yourself and your child vaccinated when the vaccine becomes available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze (Throw tissue in the trash after you use it) or cough into your elbow if no tissue is available. Advise your child to do the same.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread easily this way.
- Have your child stay home if he/or she is sick until they are fever free (without the use of fever reducing medications) for 24 hours or other symptoms resolve.

With regard to seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccine: There has been a delay in availability of both seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccine nation-wide due to production and distribution problems. The Braintree Board of Health does not anticipate receiving H1N1 vaccine until late November and seasonal flu vaccine until early December. The priority groups to receive H1N1 vaccine first (according to CDC recommendations) are pregnant women, children, caregivers of infants and healthcare workers with direct patient contact. As more vaccine becomes available then additional priority groups of young adults up to age 24 and people between the ages of 25 and 64 with underlying health conditions like asthma and diabetes will receive the vaccine. The Board of Health will conduct public clinics as soon as the vaccine is available.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with your school nurse or Paula Dowd at 781-848-4000 ext. 2224. For more information on H1N1 or seasonal flu, visit [www.mass.gov/flu](http://www.mass.gov/flu).

Sincerely,

Peter A. Kurzberg  
Superintendent of Schools

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