



**Based on current information and guidelines for school settings, H1N1 should be managed in the manner that a seasonal influenza case would be managed.**

At this point, H1N1 testing by the TCPH Laboratory will be performed only under these circumstances:

- a patient who has been hospitalized for more than 48 hours with influenza-like illness (ILI) as defined by a fever more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit AND cough and/or sore throat PLUS one or both of the following conditions - severe illness, such as lower respiratory tract infection or pneumonia or "unusual presentation" in a child, adult or person with immunosuppression;
- a person who has died with ILI and has no other known cause of death;
- pregnant females with ILI;
- individuals as part of a critical public health investigation; and samples submitted by provider participants in the surveillance system program.

In accordance with CDC guidance, cases of influenza-like illness, whether caused by pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza or seasonal influenza, are not required to be tested (see above explanation) by the local health department or reported to local health officials. Since pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza is NO LONGER a reportable condition, health officials rely on healthcare providers and facilities to report hospitalizations and deaths thought to be associated with this virus. As in previous years, TCPH relies on school health officials to report unusual clusters of illness and/or significant absenteeism thought to be associated with any influenza-like illness, now including H1N1, even though it is not separately recorded. Testing for the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus is commercially available.

Tarrant County ISDs have the opportunity to notify TCPH of total absenteeism and absenteeism due to ILI on a daily basis. TCPH supports a web-based reporting system to aid the ISD nurses in this task. Also, TCPH monitors ER data related to respiratory illnesses and other conditions on a daily basis in order to have a current picture of the community and the regional situation. Additionally, all participating providers and interested stakeholders are sent a weekly report describing the flu activity in the community.

The current guidance from the CDC recommends the promotion of frequent cleaning of bathrooms and other frequently used areas, ensuring adequate supplies of soap and paper towels. If possible, provide no-touch wastebaskets and empty them frequently. Establish regular schedules for frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces such as:

- Doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons
- Desks, tables, chairs
- Counters and surfaces in cafeterias, meeting rooms, and offices

The CDC also recommends that institutions provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down by students before each use. High-use surfaces include:

- Chairs, desks, study carrels
- Remote controls Keyboards shared by students
- Headphones shared in language laboratories
- Telephone receivers and touch-tone pads in common areas

There are more than 500 disinfectants registered with the EPA stated to be effective against "influenza A" and based on current information, these products should be effective against the novel H1N1 (2009) influenza virus. A link to a list of these products is <http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/influenza-a-product-list.pdf>; please note this list is not a complete list of all products registered and available and all products should be used per the manufacturer's specifications.

**Please note that though routine cleaning is important in breaking the transmission of influenza, a major focus in the prevention of influenza should be awareness of personal hygiene and respiratory etiquette which includes frequent hand washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based cleaner and covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.**

A combination of improving personal hygiene, adoption and practice of respiratory etiquette and surface decontamination should work towards curbing the spread of the influenza this season.

At TCPH, we are continuing our efforts to safeguard the community's health...it was done in the spring and it will continue to be done now, as well as in the future.

For additional information, please visit <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/eHealth/site/default.asp>.