

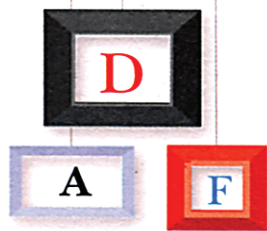
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Oakwood Flu Plan laid out by Superintendent

Six weeks ago students and educators returned to school to focus on the academic and extra-curricular experiences that would define the 2009-2010 school year. We have learned in these opening weeks of school that health education will be a priority.

As cases of both seasonal and H1N1 influenza increase in the general population, school districts have an important role in preventing the spread of the flu. The role of school districts in minimizing the spread of seasonal flu and H1N1 includes four key components.

Developing and Implementing a Plan of Action

Oakwood's Flu Plan was last updated in August using resources from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Public Health Dayton and Montgomery County (PHDMC). Members of the review team included the district nurse, Oakwood's Health Commissioner, principals and district administrators. This plan provides a framework for decision-making by addressing infection control measures, levels of response, projected scenarios and resources. Copies of Oakwood's Flu Plan are available at all schools. The CDC's Communication Toolkit for K-12 Schools, upon which our plan was based, can be found at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu.

Educating Members of the School Community about Preventative Measures and School Procedures to Follow in Case of Illness

By now, the preventative strategies are familiar to us:

Receive the H1N1 and seasonal flu shot if indicated by your health care provider

Frequently wash your hands well for at least 20 seconds with soap and water

Use a waterless hand sanitizer if soap and water isn't available

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick

Stay home from school at least 24

hours after you no longer have a fever. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Don't share drinks, etc..

Cough/sneeze into a tissue or elbow – not into your hands

It is essential that students and school personnel stay home from school for 24 hours after they no longer have a fever nor need fever-reducing medication. This is a difficult rule for educators as well as for many students because they hate to miss school. It can also be a challenge for working parents who have limited options in making alternate childcare plans. Nonetheless, it is necessary in containing the spread of influenza. It is also important for parents to make sure the school has your correct contact information in the event the nurse needs to contact you during the school day.

Communicating Important Updates in a Timely Fashion

When communities are grappling with outbreaks like seasonal and H1N1 flu, it does not take long for news about a development to travel. Sometimes, though, news becomes rumor through multiple retellings. This makes the dissemination of timely and accurate information so important. Oakwood's Flu Plan directs us to utilize our website, automatic call system, print letters and group emails to keep our school community informed. Our best source of updated information is the district website. School parents and residents are encouraged to visit our district website -- www.oakwood.k12.oh.us -- and click on the H1N1 link for regularly updated information. Interested persons can also subscribe to each school's email list by visiting the school's website and locating the sign-up link. Of course, persons with specific concerns or questions should not hesitate to contact our school nurses, principals or myself.

Cooperating with Local Public Health Departments and Health Care Professionals

The Oakwood Schools are working closely with Oakwood's Health Commissioner, Dr. Richard

Garrison, and with Public Health Dayton and Montgomery County (PHDMC).

In a recent update from the PHDMC, school districts were informed that the H1N1 virus is no longer considered a new influenza virus. This means that most influenza cases will now be reported to PHDMC in aggregate numbers only. Names and demographic information will be received only if the individual is hospitalized or a pediatric death occurs. As a result, the PHDMC will not have specific data to report to school districts when a student contracts the flu virus and recovers at home. The "confirmed case" information we have been providing on the Oakwood School District website -- www.oakwood.k12.oh.us -- will reflect this change in data collection.

Most likely, you have been attentive to media reports that school-age children are a priority group for vaccination. The Oakwood Schools will join other Montgomery County school districts in cooperating with the Public Health Department to conduct a School Immunization Program. In November and December, Oakwood students will have the opportunity to receive the H1N1 flu shot during the school day on dates to be determined. These vaccinations will be free of charge to students. Procedures and parental consent forms should be distributed the week of October 19. There is no requirement for students to be vaccinated at school. Detailed information will be available on our website and at our schools as soon it is available.

This year, we are striving to earn an A+ in Health by being alert to the symptoms of flu and working together to prevent the spread of seasonal and H1N1 influenza. For more information, please contact your child's school principal, school nurse or visit the Oakwood School District website at www.oakwood.k12.oh.us.

For news about county-wide efforts, visit the Health Department's website at www.phdmc.org or contact their Influenza Hotline at 224-8796 Monday-Friday between 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

4 H1N1 flu cases reported in Oakwood schools

According to the Oakwood School District website, there has been a doubling of reported H1N1 flu cases from two to four reported cases in the Oakwood schools since two weeks ago. One case each has been reported at Lange School, Edwin D. Smith

Elementary School, Harman Elementary School and Oakwood High School. There have been no cases reported at Oakwood Jr. High School.

Oakwood Schools are cooperating with PHDMC by serving as locations for student H1N1 flu

vaccinations. Detailed information about optional participation will be sent home the week of Oct. 19 and will be available on the Oakwood schools website. Nov. 13 - Smith School; Nov. 16 - OJHS/OHS; Nov. 18 - Lange School; Nov. 19 - Harman School.

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