



VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

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The Virginia High School League is an alliance of Virginia's public high schools that promotes education, leadership, sportsmanship, character and citizenship for students by establishing and maintaining high standards for school activities and competitions.

MEDIA ADVISORY

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2009 Flu Season Recommendations Virginia High School League (VHSL)

*VHSL Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and the Virginia Department of Health
make recommendations*

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA — As you may know, the novel H1N1 influenza virus, also known as swine flu, is a new influenza virus that causes illness in people. This virus was first detected in the United States in April 2009 and it has continued to spread from person-to-person, in much the same way that the annual influenza virus spreads. The virus is easily transmitted from person-to-person and has caused not only sporadic infections, but also large outbreaks across the globe. Novel influenza H1N1, like the seasonal flu, is spread mainly through coughing or sneezing.

Many people over the age of 65 may have some immunity to the 2009 novel H1N1 virus (probably from infection years ago to a similar virus). Young people (especially those aged 24 and younger) do not. Like seasonal flu, the large majority of those who become infected with the 2009 H1N1 virus develop mild illness and have recovered without needing medical treatment. However, some people are considered at higher risk for developing influenza-related complications – see below.

Common symptoms of all flu viruses, including novel H1N1 influenza virus include:

- Fever
- Cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue

Less common symptoms that have been reported in younger persons are:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

In an effort to maintain health and wellness throughout the community during the 2009 flu season, the VHSL Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and the Virginia Department of Health

have some recommendations regarding sport contests and team practices that may help to reduce transmission of the virus throughout the flu season.

Recommendations for coaches and event organizers:

- Encourage your athletes and those that work with them (staff, volunteers, parents) to protect themselves against the flu with vaccinations against both seasonal and novel H1N1 influenza.
- Ensure that soap and running water, hand sanitizers, tissues, and trash receptacles are available at all events.
- Promote frequent hand washing with soap and water as soon as possible following all contests and practices. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used.
- Communicate to team members, parents, and other attendees that they should stay home if ill with flu-like symptoms. Ill persons should stay at home until they have had no fever for a full 24 hours, without using fever-reducing medicines such as Tylenol. A fever is a body temperature of 100° F or greater.
- Advise team participants to go home if they are feeling ill or experiencing flu-like symptoms. If they are unable to go home (ex. they are at another school and have no transportation home), have them sit at least 6 feet away from others while keeping them under close observation by an adult.
- Do not allow your team members and athletes to share drinks, drinking items, food, utensils, etc.
- Keep sports equipment and sporting areas clean, using routine sanitation methods and products. Items soiled from coughing or nasal discharges can spread influenza.

Recommendations for rescheduling of team contests:

- Based on the current characteristics of this new flu strain, VDH does not recommend cancelling team contests or practices. We believe the best practices to minimize the impact of flu this season include encouraging sick people to stay home, separating ill students and staff, promoting hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and allowing schools to operate normally.

Recommendations for parents:

- Get vaccinated and have your child vaccinated. The most effective way to protect you and your child against the flu is to get vaccinated. It is recommended that you and your child be vaccinated with the seasonal flu vaccine now and the novel H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. People at high risk for flu complications who become ill with flu-like illness should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible.
 - Those at higher risk for H1N1 flu complications are:
 - Children younger than 2 years old;
 - Persons aged 65 years or older
 - Pregnant women
 - Persons of any age with certain chronic medical or immunosuppressive conditions :
 - Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus);
 - Disorders that that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions or that can increase the risk for

aspiration (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders)

- Immunosuppression, including that caused by medications or by HIV;
- Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy, because of an increased risk for Reye syndrome.
- If your child has flu-like symptoms, it is important for your child to stay at home and should not attend school or team practice until 24 hours after his or her fever has subsided, without the use of fever-reducing medicines such as Tylenol.
- Encourage good hand washing and respiratory etiquette, such as covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throwing the tissue in the trash after use.

Recommendations for team members:

- Wash hands with soap and water as soon as possible following all contests and practices.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because germs spread this way.
- Use water bottles correctly, squirt water into your mouth; do not touch the water bottle with your mouth.
- Do not share drinks or eat from another person's plate or dish.
- Keep your sports equipment clean using routine, recommended cleaning products and methods.
- If you are experiencing signs or symptoms of the flu, you should not attend school or team practice until your fever has subsided for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine such as Tylenol.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Learn the symptoms of influenza and stay home if you get sick.

Should you have any questions, please seek the advice of your family physician or other healthcare provider.

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