

City of Newton



David B. Cohen  
Mayor

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

J. David Naparstek, Commissioner  
1294 Centre Street  
Newton, MA 02459-1544

Telephone 617.796.1420 Fax 617.552.7063  
TDD/TTY 617-796-1089



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Tuesday, May 26, 2009

As you probably know, cases of influenza like illness (ILI) are being reported throughout the community. Therefore we are not surprised to note that several Newton Public schools are reporting a small increase in flu activity today.

In response to this, all of the school nurses will be doing enhanced surveillance in keeping with the guidance provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). This includes:

- Monitoring daily attendance to identify if there is an increase of absenteeism and verifying the reason for absence.
- Asking teachers to send any students that appear ill to the school nurse for an assessment.
- Enforcing a seven day exclusion for all students with ILI.
- Continuing the strong directive to practice good hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Working with support services to ensure that soap and hand sanitizer are readily available. When age appropriate, parents may choose to send a personal supply of hand sanitizer for use throughout the day.

We need parents help to manage this illness outbreak. Please take the following steps:

- Make sure your child does not have flu-like symptoms before you send him/her to school each morning.
- **If your child has signs of the flu, please keep them home for seven days after their symptoms start, or 24 hours after their symptoms go away—whichever is longer.**
- Notify the school if your child has ILI.
- Reinforce the hand hygiene/cough etiquette message at home.

To continue to keep you fully informed about the Oak Hill outbreak, here is today's report. Forty seven students are absent or were sent home from school with illness. Of the 47, 18 appear to be new cases of ILI, 15 are ongoing cases of ILI and 14 are absent for other reasons or were unable to be reached.

The school department and health department will continue regular communication to make an informed decision every day about the status of each school.

We appreciate your continued cooperation and support as we work together to reduce the flu in our community.