

H1N1: What we know *today*.

I attended the local H1N1 flu informational summit held by the Mid America Regional Council on Monday, September 14th, to learn the very latest recommendations and what hospitals and schools are experiencing thus far in our area. Information is changing rapidly, but there is some good news. This flu strain, while easily contracted, seems to be mild in severity and short in duration of illness lasting only two to three days in many of the reported probable cases.

Symptoms are fever greater than 100 degrees F, cough or sore throat with the usual malaise associated with flu. CDC and local health department recommendations are to first and foremost stay home when you are sick to keep from spreading the virus to others at work and school. Remain at home until fever free for 24 hours, without the aid of a fever reducing medication. Get rest, eat nutritiously, drink plenty of fluids and generally convalesce. Seek medical attention if symptoms are severe and/or progress to shortness of breath.

Sion's preparations for what *may* be an earlier, longer and more widespread flu season this year are as follows.

- Good communication is key (so is hand washing but more on that later!). We will be in communication with the Kansas City Health Department. Please let us know if your student(s) are sick with flu-like illness when you are keeping them home.
- Absenteeism will be monitored at both the grade school campus and the high school campus on a daily basis.
- We are stressing frequent hand washing in school particularly before lunch. Alcohol based sanitizers are available in classrooms and in the lunchroom as a back-up if soap and water are not handy. We are also emphasizing covering your cough and keeping hands away from your nose and mouth (usual points of entry for the flu virus). Practice and encourage these practices at home and they will become a good habit that will take us all a long way during this fall and winter and the many flu seasons to come.
- Our cleaning crews are diligently wiping desks and other surfaces nightly.

For more information, visit www.flu.gov or call the CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu, or click on [my website](#). I'm updating it as new information becomes available.

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