

## Swine Flu Update – August 10, 2009

The H1N1 Influenza A virus, previously known as swine flu, first appeared in the US in April 2009. An increasing number of cases have appeared during the summer months in Central Florida, a time when influenza cases are usually low. The school age population is especially prone to infection with this particular strain of flu, and experts anticipate resurgence of the virus as schools start up again in the fall. This virus is contagious and is thought to be transmitted person-to-person, like other colds and flus, through droplets from coughing and sneezing, and through touching surfaces that have been contaminated by droplets and then touching the mouth, nose, and eyes—entry portals to the body. Consequently, The Master’s Academy is following the recommendations of the Centers for

Disease Control (as reported on August 7, 2009) and the Seminole County Health Department to ensure optimal health of our school population.

**At The Master’s Academy this fall, students, faculty, and staff who present to the clinic, or call in sick from home, with flu-like symptoms of fever > or =100.0 F and a sore throat and/or cough or other flu-like symptoms will be asked to stay home from school until they are symptom free for 24 hours.** Other symptoms of the H1N1 virus may include runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and possibly diarrhea and vomiting. Our school nurse will be tracking the incidence of the illness at our school. Our teachers will make every possible effort to help your student stay current with school work while recovering at home and our management of this health issue will continue to follow the recommendations of community and federal health agencies.

### **Tips to help protect yourself and your child(ren) from the spread of infection from bacteria and viruses:**

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 15–20 seconds, especially before eating, after using the bath room, and after coughing or sneezing. If a sink is not available, alcohol-based hand cleaners can be effective, but use soap and water when you can—the friction of washing and drying and the rinsing with water offers the best protection. Practice with children at home. Parents can be the most effective teachers!
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. These are the body’s entry portals where germs can enter our body and make us sick—sometimes referred to as the “T-zone” because they form the shape of the letter “T.”
- Avoid sharing personal items like drinks, food and eating utensils.
- Avoid being around others who are sick to minimize exposure to germs.
- Make exercise, sleep at night, and nutrient-rich foods a priority to strengthen the body’s immune system.
- As of Oct. 16, 2009, the H1N1 vaccine is available in some locations in Seminole and Orange Counties. Please check with your child’s physician regarding availability.

### **Tips to limit the spread of infection to others if you or your child(ren) become sick with influenza:**

- Keep washing your hands frequently to keep germs from spreading to others through commonly touched surfaces in your home.
- When sneezing or coughing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue OR with the bend of your elbow—
- **NOT** your hands. This keeps the expelled droplets from your hands, which are then likely to touch common surfaces, and spreads infection at home.
- Frequently wipe down commonly touched surfaces in your home with soap and water or alcohol-based cleaners. (Our school cleans surfaces with institutional grade disinfectants.)
- **STAY HOME** until free of flu-related symptoms for 24 hours except to seek medical care or other necessities, as social distancing helps keep germs from spreading through the community.

- Consider seeking further medical evaluation, especially if, as illness progresses, your child becomes irritable or is not drinking fluids. A simple nasal swab can confirm influenza A and antiviral medications may reduce the severity of illness if started within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms.
- Acetaminophen and ibuprofen may help ease body aches. Aspirin-containing products should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age. As always, discuss use of medications with your physician.
- Monitor the health of others in your home. Keep family members home if they begin to show symptoms of influenza.

For more information about the H1N1 virus: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu) OR [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

During these difficult economic times, The Master's Academy wishes to inform its families of community resources which may be of help to you.

### **Medical Care**

Shepherd's Hope- a Christian medical ministry offering free outpatient medical services

Fairmont Plaza, 600 N. S.R. 17/92, Suite 124

Longwood, FL

407-876-6099

Open Monday- Thursday

6-9 p.m.

Central Florida Family Health Center- Offers outpatient medical services on a sliding fee scale

2400 S.R. 415

Sanford, FL

407-322-8645

Open Monday-Wednesday- 8 a.m.- 7 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday- 8:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Friday- 8 a.m. to 12 noon

- If you are aware of additional community services which may be of help to our families, please contact the School Nurse at [annbirkmire@mastersacademy.org](mailto:annbirkmire@mastersacademy.org).