

# RAUMATI BEACH SCHOOL

11 August 2010

Dear Parents and Caregivers

## INFLUENZA – H1N1 – SWINE FLU

We have had a case of Influenza H1N1 within the School reported to us this week (*note that this has not been confirmed with medical tests – but the Doctor has diagnosed it*).

Public Health have sent a letter to all School Principals and Staff with some important notes regarding 'Swine Flu'. Please see below for the contents of the letter and some recommendations for dealing with it:-

*Swine flu is the most common strain of influenza circulating in New Zealand this year. The main symptoms of this are high temperatures, chills, headache, nausea, and some vomiting and diarrhoea. Younger children are more likely to experience vomiting and diarrhoea with the flu. Influenza can quickly spread in schools.*

To help reduce the spread of illness in schools, Regional Public Health recommends the following actions:

**1. Students with flu-like symptoms should not be at school.** Children can still be infectious even when they appear well and need to stay home from school until 2 days (48hrs) after all signs of flu have gone. In general a flu-like illness lasts 3-4 days but it can be up to 7 days.

People worried about their symptoms or who have an underlying condition that makes them vulnerable to severe influenza illness, for example - asthma, can telephone Healthline 0800 611 116 or their family doctor for further advice.

If students become unwell with flu-like symptoms while at school, they need to go home to be cared for.

**2. Prevent the spread of germs** by ensuring everyone covers their mouth and nose with tissues when coughing and sneezing and put used tissues in a covered bin or a plastic bag. (If there are no tissues available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve – not your hands). Remember to wash or sanitise your hands afterwards. Fresh supplies of Hand Sanitizer will be available in all classrooms tomorrow. Please provide your child with tissues if they are snuffly.

**3. Encourage students to wash their hands regularly.** Clean hands are the single most important factor in preventing the spread of germs. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water and dry them for 20 seconds with a dry towel or paper towel, or use an alcohol-based hand rub. Wash hands before preparing food, eating and after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose and visiting the toilet. We are currently printing and laminating new signs to replace those put up after last years planning.

**4. Influenza immunisation.** There is still time to get immunised from your family doctor. This is particularly important for schools in the Kapiti region that did not seem to be as badly affected by swine flu last year. This year's vaccine includes protection against the H1N1 swine flu strain. It is important to note that it takes 10-14 days from the time of vaccination to develop immunity and if somebody has already been exposed to the flu virus before immunity develops, the vaccine will not prevent infection.

If you have any queries or require further information, please contact your school's Public Health Nurse on 04 570 9002 or your family doctor.

Regards

Mike Farrelly  
PRINCIPAL