

## **STEPS FOR PARENTS TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD AND FAMILY FROM THE FLU DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR**

*(There are 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home)*

- 1. Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective (rub cleaners until the hands are dry to be most effective).
- 2. Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
- 3. Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (**without the use of fever-reducing medicine**). A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, signs of a fever may include a feeling of warmth, a flushed appearance or sweating or shivering. Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- 4. Get your family vaccinated** for the seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines become available.

**Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:**

- Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick.
- Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of the flu. **These symptoms may include: fever, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea or vomiting or diarrhea.** You should stay home and avoid contact with others.
- Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age, and those with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, etc.
- Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members
- Update emergency contact lists.
- Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if your child is sick and must stay home.

**Columbia Public Schools is in constant collaboration with the Boone County Health Department to provide you and your family with the most current updates on the flu.**