



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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NASHVILLE TENNESSEE 37243

**PHIL BREDESEN**  
GOVERNOR

**SUSAN R. COOPER, MSN, RN**  
COMMISSIONER

August 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A new influenza (flu) strain is spreading around the world. This new flu is expected to infect many more people than yearly seasonal flu.

You and your family can help reduce the spread of flu at school and in the community. Good health habits like washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick help protect everyone from the flu. In addition, seasonal flu vaccine is recommended for all students every year. It is expected that a vaccine against the new strain of flu will also be available later this fall.

Most people who get flu recover without any treatment or special care. However, flu can cause serious illness in some people, especially those with other health problems. For **all** children and adults who develop a fever of at least 100°F and a cough or sore throat (unless you know the cause and it is not influenza), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends:

- The sick person should stay home, unless medical care is needed, for at least 7 calendar days or until fully recovered for at least 24 hours, whichever is longer. No test for influenza or doctor's note is necessary to justify the absence.
- Students and staff who are well may attend school, even if others at home are sick, but they should stay home as soon as they develop signs of illness.
- Students or staff who become ill at school will be separated from others and sent home as soon as possible.
- During the days of absence from school, sick students should not risk infecting others and should avoid gathering in other public settings or attending any child care facility.

We urge you to **make plans now** for child care at home if your child becomes ill or cannot go to school for a week or longer. Even if your child is not ill, schools may dismiss all students if the number of ill children or staff becomes high. Make plans with family, friends or other parents if you can not stay home with your child.

**As information about this new flu becomes available and as we get more details about vaccine, we will update our plans and recommendations and make them available to you on the Tennessee Department of Health Web site at [www.state.tn.us/health](http://www.state.tn.us/health). Please plan to check it regularly.**

For information on vaccines, how to care for a sick person at home and for other questions about flu, contact your health care provider, local health department or visit the following Web sites:

- [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov), [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or [www.state.tn.us/health](http://www.state.tn.us/health) (Tennessee Department of Health)

Thank you in advance for your help in protecting the health of all Tennessee students.

Sincerely,

*Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN*  
Commissioner of Health

*Judy K. Wall*  
Commissioner of Education