

FLU ALERT

Soccer season is flu season, and this year we are taking a closer look at what soccer parents can do to help minimize the spread of seasonal and H1N1 flu. If your player shows symptoms of flu sickness, please keep him or her out of games and practice until at least 24 hours after fever subsides without medication. *To limit transmission of the virus, we recommend that teams use hand sanitizer before eating that sideline snack. Thank you!*

Seasonal and H1N1 flu have been in the headlines lately, causing schools, businesses, and public entities to consider their roles in the transmission of the flu virus. We're doing the same thing in the youth soccer community. By making this flu information available to parents and coaches, we hope to limit the spread of the virus and promote the healthy, active lifestyle that is intrinsic to soccer.

How does the new H1N1 virus make things different this year?

Seasonal flu presents a health risk every year. What's new is that the novel H1N1 flu virus has caused illness and hospitalization during the normally flu-free summer months. There is some uncertainty about what the upcoming flu season might bring.

While the CDC advises people to get a seasonal flu shot, it also warns that the seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against 2009 H1N1 influenza. A supplementary 2009 H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public this fall.

How is the virus transmitted?

The spread of novel H1N1 virus is thought to happen in the same way that seasonal flu spreads within homes or communities. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people who are sick with flu. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it, and then touching their mouth or nose before washing their hands.

While soccer and other youth sports create social settings with unavoidable person-to-person contact, the CDC does not discourage play or interaction among healthy individuals.

What can soccer parents do?

- Talk to your pediatrician about seasonal and H1N1 flu shots.
- If you suspect your child has influenza, call your pediatrician. Antiviral medication, if taken soon after infection, can shorten the duration of the illness.
- If your child gets sick (i.e., fever with either cough or sore throat), limit contact with others and keep him or her out of soccer practice and games. Players with influenza-like illness should stay home at least 24 hours after fever and other symptoms have resolved without medication.
- Discourage the players from sharing water bottles.
- Wash hands before the post game snack. It is recommended that every soccer team use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to prevent the hand-to-mouth transmission of the virus.

What are the symptoms of flu sickness?

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache, muscle aches
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, also can occur.

Helpful Links:

The US Government's flu clearinghouse: www.flu.gov

Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

American Association of Pediatrics:

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/may09swineflu.htm>

US Youth Soccer flu statement: www.usyouthsoccer.org/news/story.asp?story_id=4758

Sacramento City Unified School District:

www.scusd.edu/SupportServices/Health%20Services/Pages/H1N1.aspx