



Cochise County Health Department

Letter from the Cochise County Health Director

Vaira Harik, Director
September 16, 2009

"Building A Healthier Future"

Dear Parents,

It is now "flu season" in our community. This year it's more complicated than most years since we have two types of influenza to be concerned with—Seasonal Flu, and Novel H1N1 Flu.

We started seeing H1N1 last spring just before school ended for the summer and it looks like it's here to stay.

Fortunately the precautions you need to take for both types of flu are very similar:

1. If your child is running a fever and coughing/sneezing you need to keep them home until the fever has been gone for 24 hours. **If you send your child to school sick the school will send them home.** So please plan now how you will deal with this.
2. Children need to be taught to cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue or with their sleeve, NOT WITH THEIR BARE HANDS (that goes for parents too!). Frequent hand-washing is also very important.
3. Vaccinate your children against the Seasonal Flu as soon as possible—contact your doctor to check the availability of children's vaccine. The Health Department will also be holding children's flu shot clinics in October as soon as the vaccine is available. We will be posting a schedule as soon as it can be finalized (the vaccine isn't here yet).
4. Vaccinate your children against the Novel H1N1 Flu as soon as possible. **This issue is a little more tricky because:**

- a. **We don't know when the vaccine will be available (November maybe), and**
- b. **When it does become available not all kids are immediately eligible.**

First in line for the vaccine are children from the ages of 6 months to 5 years old, students with medical conditions (asthma, diabetes, and neuro-muscular disorders), and caregivers of children less than 6 months old, among other groups. Eventually, there will be enough H1N1 vaccine to vaccinate everyone who wants a shot, but it will take us a few months to get to that point. **IN THE MEANTIME PREVENTION IS KEY.**

In order to contain the spread of the seasonal and H1N1 flu viruses I need your help.

PLAN NOW. If your child is sick with a fever and is coughing or sneezing **PLEASE** keep them home.

Questions? Email me at vharik@cochise.az.gov. Thank you for your cooperation!

Vaira Harik, Health Director

Your County Questions Answered: www.cochisecounty.com

Email: health@cochise.az.gov

Main: 1415 Melody Lane, Bldg. A, Bisbee, AZ 85603
Benson: 126 W. 5th Street, Benson, AZ 85602
Douglas: 515 7th Street, Douglas, AZ 85607
Sierra Vista: 4115 E. Foothills Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635
Willcox: 450 S. Haskell Avenue, Willcox, AZ 85643

Phone: 520-432-9400
 Phone: 520-586-8200
 Phone: 520-364-5600
 Phone: 520-803-3900
 Phone: 520-384-7100

Fax: 520-432-9480
 Fax: 520-586-2051
 Fax: 520-364-5453
 Fax: 520-459-8195
 Fax: 520-384-0309