



## Flu Goes Back to School, Too

*Wentzville district reacts quickly to cluster of cases*

As a new school year begins, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is reminding parents and teachers to help children avoid becoming sick, especially with novel H1N1 flu, also known as swine flu.

In late August, the Wentzville School District reported about a dozen students out sick with the flu. To help answer questions, the district sent an informational letter home to parents. [Click here](#) to read the letter. While the Wentzville cases were not lab confirmed as H1N1, the CDC estimates that 95% of the flu cases in the U.S. right now are of the H1N1 strain.

Health department director Gil Copley praised the Wentzville district for its quick response. "Children are particularly susceptible to H1N1 flu, and once it gets a foothold in a school, the virus can spread quickly," said Copley. "Since there is no H1N1 vaccine available yet, it's important for students, parents, and teachers to take steps now to avoid spreading this virus."

Copley urged good hygiene practices, such as:

- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or using the crook of your arm
- Washing hands frequently with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Keeping children with a fever home from school until

24 hours after the fever breaks without the use of fever-reducing medication

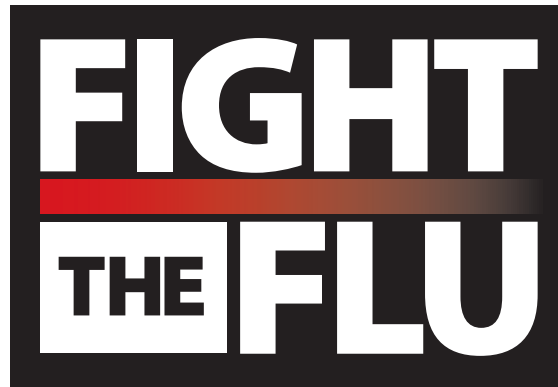
- Avoiding close contact with sick people

"What's good about these common-sense tips is that they can help children and adults prevent all sorts of infectious diseases, not just the flu," Copley said.

In addition to good hygiene, the health department is asking people to check with their health care provider about getting a regular seasonal flu shot. "While it can't prevent H1N1 infection, a seasonal flu shot can give you protection against three of the most common seasonal flu viruses," said Copley.

As the flu season ramps up, the health department will provide updates about the flu, its prevention, and available vaccinations. Schools, businesses, and individuals should monitor the latest guidelines from the CDC, available online at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu). The department is also keeping its special webpage updated at [www.scchealth.org/swineflu](http://www.scchealth.org/swineflu).

Later in September, St. Charles County, in collaboration with health departments across Missouri, will launch a "Fight the Flu" informational campaign. The effort will include brochures and flyers, radio and TV ads, and podcasts on the Internet. To learn more about the campaign, log on to [www.FightTheFluMO.com](http://www.FightTheFluMO.com).



## From the Director



Gil Copley

There is a lot of information in this issue of *Health-E-News* discussing the Novel H1N1 flu, also known as swine flu. I want to take this opportunity to assure all of our residents and others who read this publication that we will always do our best to share what we know when there is a rapidly changing health situation such as the current H1N1 Influenza epidemic. Almost as important as letting you know that we will share what we know is letting you know that if we do NOT know something we will tell you that as well. An example is the frequently asked question, "When will the H1N1 vaccine be available?" The answer is that we are assuming from what we've been told by the CDC that it will probably be available in limited quantities in late October. However, we don't know when we will have enough to cover all of those at risk. When we do find out, we will say so without delay.

To continue reading this article, click on [From the Director](#)



# National Preparedness Month

Adapted from [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov)

September is National Preparedness Month (NPM), a nationwide effort sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Ready Campaign in partnership with Citizen Corps. The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is taking part in this nationwide effort to encourage individuals, families and communities to prepare for emergencies.

This year, NPM focuses on changing perceptions about emergency preparedness and will help Americans understand what it truly means to be "Ready." Preparedness goes beyond fire alarms, smoke detectors, dead-bolt locks, and extra food in the pantry. Being Ready includes getting an Emergency Supply Kit, making a Family Emergency Plan, being informed about emergencies and their appropriate responses, and getting involved in community efforts such as Citizen Corps.

While St. Charles County has plans to prepare for and respond to emergencies, we urge you to become educated, trained, and better prepared at home. Emergencies will happen, but taking action now can help us minimize the impact they will have on our lives.

The state of Missouri has an excellent preparedness program for families and individuals called "Ready in 3." It focuses on the three steps to preparedness:

- Create a plan
- Prepare a kit
- Listen for information.

Since its debut, "Ready in 3" has expanded over the years to include preparedness information for specific groups in our community, including pet owners, senior citizens, and people receiving in-home health care. Best of all, the information and materials are free for Missouri residents. To get copies of these materials, visit [www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready\\_in\\_3](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3) or call the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment at (636) 949-7400.

You can also get involved in preparing your neighborhood or community. All over America, residents have organized Citizen Corps Councils to involve local governments and civic organizations in emergency management planning, mitigation, response, and recovery activities. You can get involved in St. Charles County by visiting [this site](http://this.site). For other communities, find your local council at [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov).



## got chemicals?

**Household Hazardous Waste  
Collection Event**  
*Last one for 2009!*

**Saturday, September 26**  
**9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Recycle Works Central**  
**60 Triad South Drive**

## Volunteers Wanted!

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is looking for a few good men and women. Novel H1N1 flu, also known as swine flu, is expected to return this fall, and volunteers may be needed to help staff vaccination clinics or perform other tasks as part of the response.

"Our department has been working all summer on H1N1 plans," said Hope Woodson, public health response planner for the department. "In the past, health care providers in St. Charles County have done an excellent job vaccinating residents against the flu. However, they may be overwhelmed this year by the numbers of people looking for shots. While we don't expect a need for mass vaccination clinics, we want to be ready just in case."

All types of skills are needed, not just people with a medical background. "If someone wants to be part of the effort, we will find a place for them," Woodson said.

To volunteer, simply log on to [www.scchealth.org](http://www.scchealth.org) and click the button labeled "Volunteers Needed." Applicants can either complete and submit the form online, or print it out and mail it in. The address is 1650 Boone's Lick Road, St. Charles, Missouri 63301. For more information about the volunteer recruiting effort, contact Hope Woodson at (636) 949-7554.

# Take Five for Health

**Adapted from CDC**

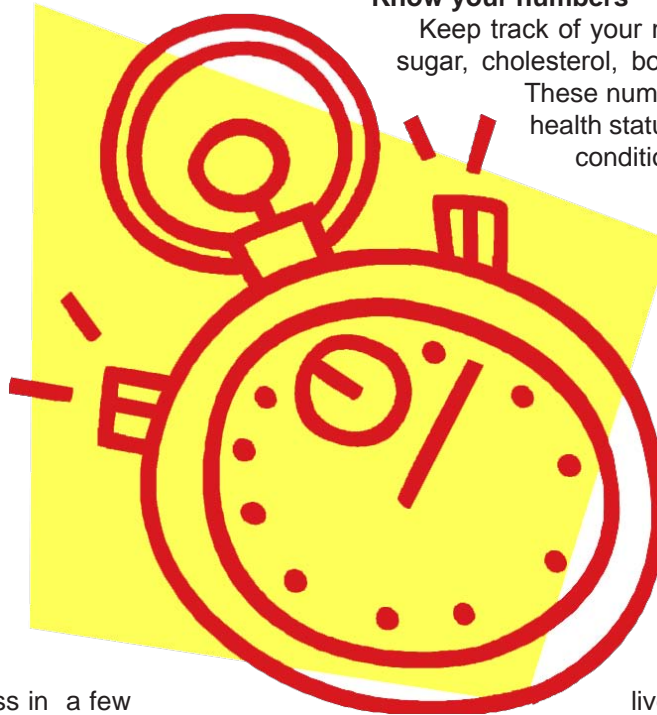
“Take Five” for your health! Being healthy and safe takes commitment, but it doesn’t have to be time-consuming. Most things are so simple and take so little time, that you’ll wonder why you’ve been avoiding them. Taking just a few of the 1,440 minutes in a day is worth having a safer and healthier life for you and your family. Below are some steps you can take to help protect your health and safety in five minutes or less.

**Protect your skin**

Wear sunscreen, seek shade, and cover up to help lower your risk for sunburn and skin cancer. Wear insect repellent with DEET or Picaridin to protect yourself from mosquito and tick bites, which can cause disease. Set your water heater’s thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower to help prevent burns.

**Stop using tobacco**

Stopping tobacco use can be very difficult, but it’s not impossible. If you do feel the urge to light up or have a dip, take a break. The urge will usually pass in a few minutes. When you feel the urge, do something else. Take deep breaths and let them out slowly. Drink a glass of water, or chew a piece of gum. Smoking even a few cigarettes a day and being around secondhand smoke can hurt your health. The only safe choice is to quit completely.



**Protect your hearing**

Noise-induced hearing loss is one of the most common occupational diseases and the second most self-reported occupational illness or injury. Use hearing protectors such as ear plugs and ear muffs when you can’t lower noise to a safe level.

**Know your numbers**

Keep track of your numbers for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, body mass index (BMI), and more.

These numbers can provide a glimpse of your health status and risk for certain diseases and conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and more. Be sure to ask your health care provider what tests you need and how often. If your numbers are too high or too low, they can make recommendations to help you get them to a healthier range.

**Make sure you are up-to-date on your vaccinations**

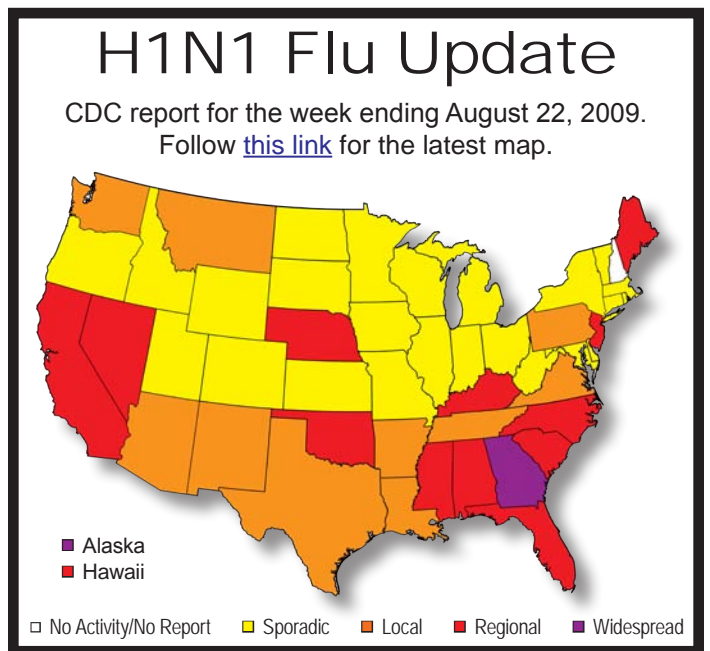
Keep track of your and your family’s vaccinations, and make sure they stay up-to-date. Children, young adults, and older adults all need vaccinations. Vaccinations help protect people from diseases and save lives. Check with your health care provider to see what vaccinations they recommend.

For a full list of the simple, everyday things you can do to “Take Five” for your health, log on to [www.cdc.gov/family/minutes](http://www.cdc.gov/family/minutes).

*We’re Tweeting!*  
  
 @SCCHealth

**Helpful Phone Numbers**

Division of Public Health (636) 949-7400	WIC (636) 949-7402
Health Education (636) 949-7401	Recycle Works Central (636) 949-7900, ext. 4267
Vital Records (636) 949-7558	Recycle Works West (636) 949-7900, ext. 4271
Health/STD Clinic (636) 949-7401	Division of Humane Services (636) 949-7387
Office of Environmental Health and Protection (636) 949-1800	Animal Control (636) 949-7347





**Share  
less.**

H1N1 flu, also known as swine flu, is poised for a comeback this fall and winter. Regular seasonal flu is also a concern.

Fight the spread of flu viruses by covering your coughs and sneezes, and stay home if you have a fever.

To avoid picking up flu viruses, wash your hands frequently. You can also prevent the flu by getting vaccinated.

**FIGHT**  
**THE FLU**



ST. CHARLES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
**Community Health  
& The Environment**

[www.scchealth.org](http://www.scchealth.org)

Print this page and put it up wherever people gather: your desk at work, the break room, or even your own home!