



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



January 16, 2020

Benita McLarin, FACHE
DIRECTOR

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

Influenza (aka the Flu) has come early in Marin County, California and throughout the country. Influenza is a viral infection that affects your respiratory system. Although most people recover, some can become very ill and in rare cases it can lead to death. We are expecting a severe flu season.

Lisa M. Santora, MD, MPH
DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

The flu is often confused with other viruses such as the common cold. The flu is worse than the common cold. The symptoms of flu can include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue (tiredness). People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose.

3240 Kerner Boulevard
San Rafael, CA 94901
415 473 4163 T
415 473 6002 F
415 473 3232 TTY
marinhhs.org/public-health

Please consider the following actions to keep your family and school community healthy:

- **Stay home** when you are sick and keep your children home when they are sick. People with the flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. If a person is in contact with a person sick with the flu, it usually takes 1 to 4 days for symptoms to start. We recommend that you keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever (as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher) is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicines like Motrin® or Tylenol®)
- **Wash hands** often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Cover your cough** using your elbow and cover your sneezes with a tissue.
- **Avoid** touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- **Frequently clean** commonly touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs and cell phones.
- **Get vaccinated annually. It is not too late to get the flu vaccine.** Even if it is not 100% effective, it can help reduce the severity of symptoms, hospitalizations and deaths related to the flu. As a reminder, children

younger than 9 years old who are getting the flu vaccine for the first time must have 2 doses at least 4 weeks apart. Contact your medical provider to get a flu shot. The vaccine is also available at many retail pharmacies.

Although the flu is generally not harmful to healthy individuals, it can be a severe illness in children younger than 5 years old, pregnant women, adults age 65 years and older, and people with chronic health conditions or immune system problems that make it difficult to fight off infection. For these individuals, or anyone who is severely ill, we recommend contacting your medical provider for advice on antiviral flu medications.

For more information about the flu, please visit marinflu.org. To find a flu vaccine at a location near you, visit vaccinefinder.org. Thank you for keeping your family and community healthy this winter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Santora'.

Lisa Santora, MD, MPH
Deputy Public Health Officer