



FLU ADVISORY/PRECAUTIONS

October 2009

Dear Merrimack Valley Members & Program Participants:

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in the YMCA. We want to keep our facilities and programs open and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **But, we need your help to do this.**

We are working with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the local health department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools and programs. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

For now we are doing everything we can to keep our YMCA functioning as usual. Here are a few things you can do to help and to teach children, regardless how young, to do so as well.

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Do not share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and cover coughs and sneezes with tissues. Covering up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- **Wipe down fitness equipment after you use it.** Disposable cleaning products are provided through the wellness center. Please bring cloth towels from home if needed.
- **We have installed additional antibacterial hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the YMCA.** Please use these liberally.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Stay at home and keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours *after* fever has subsided, without using fever-reducing drugs. Staying at home and keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Do not go to work or to the YMCA when sick and do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at the YMCA *will be sent home.*

If the flu becomes more severe, we may take additional steps in our child care centers to prevent the spread such as:

- conducting active fever and flu symptom screening of students and staff as they arrive at school,
- making changes to increase the space between people such as moving desks farther apart and postponing class trips, and
- dismissing students from school/program for at least 7 days if they become sick.

For more information, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in our community and what our school is doing visit www.eec.org. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Should you have any additional questions, please contact the Executive Director.

Sincerely,

YMCA Staff