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What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

- **Stay informed.** The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) website (<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/>) will be updated regularly as information becomes available. Information from IDPH on Novel Influenza A (H1N1) is now also available through Twitter. To 'follow' the Iowa Dept. of Public Health on Twitter, go to www.twitter.com, and search for 'IAPublicHealth'. Updates are posted frequently regarding probable and confirmed cases, along with other important health information for Iowans.
- Influenza is thought to **spread mainly person-to-person** through coughing or sneezing of infected people. Thus everyone should take everyday actions to stay healthy:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
 - Stay home if you get sick. IDPH recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
 - Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

In addition to the common sense practices listed above; social distancing practices can also reduce the risk of spreading influenza.

Schools and Childcare Provider Recommendations:

Social distancing interventions include dismissal of students from classrooms, and may be coupled with protecting children and teenagers through social distancing in the community to reduce the number of out-of-school social contacts and community mixing.

Short of closing schools there are actions schools can take to reduce close contact between students at school.

- Increase desk spacing in classrooms
- Discourage students from congregating in hallways
- Stagger lunch periods to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria at one time
- Emphasize the need to practice good cough etiquette and frequent hand washing or use of alcohol based hand gels

When schools are closed there are actions parents can take to reduce close contact in other public and community settings

- Have the child stay home
- Limit their children's time spent in public settings (malls, movie theaters, YMCA, Public Library, etc.)
- Coordinate with other family members, friends, and neighbors for childcare arrangements in small groups (less than 5 children)
- Emphasize the need to practice good cough etiquette and frequent hand washing or use of alcohol based hand gels

Communities and Workplace Recommendations:

Social distancing measures for adults will include provisions for both workplaces and the community and can play an important role in slowing or limiting community transmission. The goals of workplace measures are to reduce transmission within the workplace and thus into the community at large, to ensure a safe working environment to promote confidence in the workplace, and to maintain business continuity, especially for critical infrastructure.

The IDPH is a partner in the Safeguard Iowa Partnership (SIP) that is working to ensure safe, resilient communities for the residents and businesses of Iowa. Through the SIP, businesses have been encouraged to plan ahead for an outbreak of novel influenza. Specific policies can be implemented to reduce close contact between employees that could increase the risk of spreading influenza.

- Leave policies that encourage employees to stay home when ill
- Flexibility for employees with children needing alternative childcare arrangements due to school closures
- Flexibility in work locations (Telecommuting)
- Flexibility in work schedules outside normal business hours
- Emphasize the need to practice good cough etiquette and frequent hand washing or use of alcohol based hand gels

Outside of the work environment adults can take action to limit their activities in public and community settings.

- Avoid close contact (3-6 feet) with other persons while out in public
- Practice good cough etiquette and frequent hand washing or use of alcohol based hand gels