

Columbia County Department of Health

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Nancy Winch, Public Health Director

Dear Parent:

Summer camp season is rapidly approaching in New York State. **This message is of the utmost importance if you are sending your child to any type of camp this season.**

Camps play a critical role in protecting the health of their campers, staff and community from contagious diseases such as H1N1 (swine flu). All members of the camp community including **parents and campers** must take an active role in limiting the spread of infection.

*****This means children who are ill should stay at home and not come to camp*****

New York State Department of Health has provided camps with guidance on H1N1 (swine flu). Parents should be aware of the recommendations listed below:

- **Campers or staff who are ill at home** should stay at home and not come to camp. They should not go into the community except for medical care for at least 7 days after the start of their illness or until they are symptom-free, whichever is longer.
- **New campers and staff** will be screened as they arrive at camp for flu-like symptoms (fever $\geq 100^{\circ}$ F with cough or sore throat) and may be sent home if ill.
- **Day campers and staff** who have flu-like symptoms should be excluded from camp activities and sent home. They should stay at home for at least 7 days or until they are symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.
- **Overnight campers** who develop flu-like symptoms while at camp will be separated from well campers and staff and excluded from camp activities for at least 7 days after the start of illness or until they are symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. These campers may be sent home during short camp sessions.

It is also important to teach your children how to reduce their risk of getting the flu and protecting others from infection:

- Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds (or while singing "Happy Birthday" twice) frequently throughout the day, after using the toilet, and before and after eating.
- Teach your children proper use of hand sanitizers (gels, rubs, wipes). These work well if they contain 60% alcohol and should be used cautiously with younger children.
- Teach your children to keep from touching their face, mouth, nose or eyes
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow.

Following these guidelines will help to reduce the spread of H1N1 and provide a safer and healthier camp experience.