



REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT 19

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December 19, 2012

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Influenza activity in Maine has steadily increased in November and December. Influenza A/H3 and influenza B have been confirmed in Maine indicating both strains are circulating. Maine CDC has followed up on 13 outbreaks of influenza as of Tuesday December 18th. Influenza hospitalizations are also being reported, indicating the severity of illness this influenza season. One pediatric death attributed to influenza was reported to Maine CDC last week. Influenza vaccination is still strongly encouraged and is widely available, especially to protect those persons at risk of more severe disease. The vaccine appears to be a good match to the circulating strains this year, and it is not too late to get vaccinated. * A full version of this advisory can be downloaded from the Maine CDC website as a Microsoft Word document (.doc) or Adobe PDF (.pdf) by clicking on www.mainepublichealth.gov and looking under the Recent Health Advisories section of the page that loads! . Please contact the MaineHAN Helpdesk at HAN@maine.gov if you have trouble accessing this document.

Recommendations:

- **Prevention:** Maine CDC recommends following the “No Flu 4 You” guidelines which include:
 - **Wash your hands:** Both the general public and healthcare providers should remember to wash their hands frequently to prevent transmission of influenza
 - **Cover your cough:** Use tissues, or cough into your sleeve
 - **Stay home when you are sick:** Symptomatic individuals should remain home while sick. Maine CDC recommends staying home until 24 hours after fever resolves without the use of medications.
 - **Get Vaccinated:** Maine CDC recommends vaccination for everyone aged 6 months and older, especially for those people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. Influenza vaccine is provided at no-cost by the state of Maine for children under the age of 19 years. Vaccine is still available through school sponsored vaccine clinics, healthcare providers, and many local pharmacies and offers protection in 14 days. For questions about vaccination please contact the Maine Immunization Program at 800-867-4775 or through immunizeme@maine.gov.

RSU 19 is actively working to sanitize and clean common surfaces, used by our staff and students, on a regular basis in all of our schools.

Gregory Potter
Superintendent of Schools