

INFLUENZA PANDEMIC UPDATE: October 16, 2009

We have been receiving updates from around the diocese that schools—both public and our Catholic schools—are experiencing increasing levels of absenteeism, most likely due to influenza (H1N1). While some areas of the diocese are more severely affected than others, it is also true that children are more at risk to catch, spread, and suffer complications from H1N1. Therefore, Bishop Amos has asked that our Catholic SCHOOLS (*not* parishes) institute the Step 2 precautions in our flu policy—especially since we are looking forward to a long flu season.

Schools should also make bottled available for those who do not wish to use water fountains.

Religious education and youth ministry programs should also implement the interventions called for in Step 2 when it comes to their activities.

Key interventions in Step 2 include:

- Reinforcing that all sick individuals (including clergy, staff and volunteers) need to stay home.
- Setting up hand washing stations (hand sanitizer, trash receptacles, tissues)
- Changing some liturgical practices:
 - Not distributing Communion under the form of wine
 - Not distributing Communion on the tongue
 - Not sharing the Sign of Peace with a handshake (rather, a bow will be used)
 - Not holding hands during the Lord's Prayer
 - The Priest(s), and the other ministers, not shaking hands in greeting (for example, as people come into or leave Mass)
 - Changing the holy water in the fonts at least daily (and after each liturgy)

Please see the entire policy for details:

<http://www.davenportdiocese.org/disaster/disasterlibrary/PlanningforPandemicInfluenzaRevised090809.pdf>