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Dear Solana Beach School District Families:

The following are several updates on immunization issues of which you should be aware.

Flu Season. The County of San Diego continues to report sporadic cases of influenza. Fortunately, influenza activity has been substantially lower than last year during the H1N1 outbreak. Nevertheless, the best way to help keep the season mild is to encourage everyone to get immunized against influenza. ***It's not too late to get a flu shot, as influenza may not peak in San Diego until March or April.***

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older receive influenza vaccine. The current vaccines contain both seasonal and H1N1 strains and provide effective protection against three common types of influenza. We urge that both staff and students at all schools get immunized to protect themselves and the community against influenza, which can be a very serious illness. Children, seniors and those persons with chronic health problems like asthma and diabetes are especially vulnerable to serious side effects from this disease.

Two doses of flu vaccine. Children age 6 months to 9 years may need two doses of influenza vaccine, depending on their past influenza immunization history. A family's physician or other health care professional will be able to recommend the appropriate number of doses.

Pertussis (whooping cough). Pertussis continues to be a serious health problem in our County, with 960 cases reported as of last week. This disease can be very serious, especially in children less than 12 months of age. Young children have more serious illness and are more likely to suffer complications such as pneumonia or convulsions. The risk of dying from pertussis is greatest for these children. Two local infants have already died this year from pertussis-related complications.

It is easy to unknowingly transmit pertussis to an unimmunized person, especially to an infant who may be too young to have received pertussis vaccine. Older children and adults should receive the pertussis vaccine to protect themselves and those around them, including very young infants, from the disease. A dose of Tdap (Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) vaccine is recommended for everyone 10 years of age or older who has not yet received it.

Thank you for your continuing support in promoting immunizations to help protect the students and community of the Solana Beach School District.

Sincerely,

Leslie Fausset
Superintendent