

GKG PROCEDURES

Minimizing the Transmission of Viruses – *last updated September 2009*

According to Rachel Gallagher, School Nurse Consultant and a nurse practitioner with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, viruses—including flu viruses like H1N1 (the “swine” flu) are most often transmitted through the air, through coughs and sneezes.

She also said that such viruses do not survive for very long outside the body, that is, they don’t survive for very long on most surfaces, like those in our vans.

She recommended a number of steps we could take to address the possible transmission of viruses. The first set of recommendations address things you can do to minimize your exposure. The second set contains things you’ll need to do to the vans. These are all common sense, easy-to-follow suggestions.

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For your own benefit and well-being, please take the following precautions.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water before and after each driving shift, and use the waterless hand wash that’s stored in each van whenever necessary; when replacement hand wash is needed, pick it up from the office storeroom.
2. Cough or sneeze into the sleeve or elbow of your jacket, not into your hands.
3. Keep your hands away from your mouth, eyes, ears, nose, and the mucus membranes in the nose.
4. Dispose of used tissues and all disinfectant cleaning wipes in the Ziploc bags that are stored in each van; when replacement tissues, wipes, or bags are needed, pick them up from the office storeroom.
5. Put as much physical distance as possible between yourself and a sick child. For example, a child who is coughing should sit on the rear bench seat of a vehicle. Be sure you can still see the child in the rearview mirror, or by making a quick head check.
6. Wear a facemask and clean gloves if you are transporting a child who is coughing or sneezing. Facemasks and gloves are stored in each van; when replacements are needed, pick them up from the office storeroom.
7. Get vaccinated at the Health Dept. This year there are three vaccines: one is a generic flu vaccine that is made available each year. The other two are aimed at the H1N1 virus, and they must be administered three to four weeks apart.

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To help minimize our riders’ exposure to viruses, please do the following each day. **Vehicle cleanliness is your responsibility.** If you do it, you know how well it was done, and your health, and that of the riders, won’t need to rely on someone else’s standards of acceptability.

1. At the start of your shift, use CLOROX disinfectant wipes (not “Wet Ones”) to clean:
 - the steering wheel
 - the touch-screen on the Garmin Nuvi (please clean very gently, using only a slightly damp wipe)
 - The gear shift handle, the turn signal, the windshield wiper knobs, the headlight switch,

- and the temperature and ventilation control switches
- the dashboard, especially the area in front of the front seat passenger
- the door handles inside and outside the van
- the arm rests throughout the van
- the handles on any booster seats that are in the van

When you finish wiping down the surfaces, dispose of the used disinfectant wipes before leaving the parking lot, or put them in a Ziploc bag for later disposal.

2. Provide children who are coughing or sneezing with tissues and a Ziploc bag to put them in. You can also offer “Wet Ones” to those children who may want to wipe their hands, mouths, and noses; Wet Ones are meant for use on human skin. When replacements are needed, pick them up from the office storeroom.
3. Ready-to-use, disposable “convenience bags,” that is, **vomit bags, are stored in the driver’s side door and/or in the pouch behind the front passenger seat.** Know their location! In the event that a child thinks he or she will vomit, or actually vomits, pull off the road and stop at a safe location, then call the office immediately. Other equipment for dealing with vomit—aromatic absorbent, gloves, goggles, a small shovel—is also stored in each vehicle.
4. Keep the vehicle’s interior comfortable but well ventilated. First, open the rear windows slightly, then adjust the vents so that either the floor and the dashboard vents, or the floor and the defroster vents, are open. Next, set the fan speed to the second or third position. Be sure the climate controls are set so fresh air enters the vehicle; you do not want to recirculate the existing air. Finally, adjust the temperature control to maintain passenger comfort.
5. Examine all areas inside the vehicle at the end of each shift. Report any suspected and/or significant biohazards to the office immediately.