



Arlington Heights School District 25 Health Services Department

Communicable Illness Prevention

As the 2014-2015 school year begins, we appreciate your cooperation and vigilance toward early detection and prevention of respiratory illness, particularly in our school settings.

With the recent increase in respiratory illness reports in many parts of the nation and Illinois, alongside the upcoming cold and flu season, Health Departments are recommending increased awareness and action to help control and prevent the spread of illness, toward keeping our students and community safe and healthy.

As you may be aware from recent media reports, **enterovirus** causes respiratory illness, and the virus can be found in respiratory secretions such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum. **The virus likely spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches contaminated surfaces.**

Many infections are mild and resolve on their own, requiring only treatment of the symptoms. Specific symptoms include fever, difficulty breathing and wheezing or asthma exacerbation. Some people with severe respiratory illness caused by enterovirus may need to be hospitalized. There is no specific treatment or vaccine for enterovirus infections; no antiviral medications are currently available for treating enterovirus infections.

You can help protect yourself and your child from respiratory illnesses by following these steps:

- If your child is experiencing cold-like symptoms with wheezing or difficulty breathing, contact your physician immediately to arrange for appropriate testing and care.
- To prevent spread of respiratory illness due to enterovirus, influenza, and other infections in the school setting, we recommend that your child stay home from school if experiencing respiratory illness symptoms (such as fever, cough, sore throat, and wheezing).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs and toys, especially if someone is sick.
- To protect against influenza, get your child and family vaccinated against seasonal flu. Vaccination is recommended yearly for everyone 6 months and older.

School District 25 Nurses