



Communicable Illness

FROM YOUR SCHOOL NURSES

During the winter months, Influenza is a typical occurrence and can be quite severe. Flu is a respiratory illness caused by a virus and the symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain or body aches. We feel that it is an appropriate time to review good health practices to protect against the flu. The best way to prevent the spread of flu is to keep children home from school if they exhibit symptoms that could suggest the illness.

1. A temperature of 99.5 degrees or above. Following any illness, the temperature should remain normal for a period of 24 hours without fever reducing medication before the child returns to school.
2. Sore or red throat, earache or swollen glands.
3. Symptoms that involve the whole body such as muscle pain or body aches.
4. Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea. Do not send a child to school until 24 hours have elapsed since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
5. Acting listless or drowsy, complaining of headache, appearing flushed, or has a lack of appetite.
6. Coughing, sniffing, or runny nose. Many communicable diseases begin with these symptoms and are most contagious at this time.

There are several ways in which you can protect yourself and your children from influenza and communicable diseases. Please reinforce these healthy habits with your children:

1. Good hand washing, especially before eating and always after using the bathroom. This prevents germs from entering our mouths.
2. Getting plenty of rest helps avoid stress to the immune system.
3. Eating three nutritious meals each day enhances our immune systems.
4. Not sharing food or drinks prevents the spread of germs.
5. Covering mouths when coughing or sneezing and disposing of tissues in a lined wastebasket helps to prevent the spread of infections.
6. Teach your children to stay 3 feet or more away from people who are sick.
7. Consider vaccinating all family members with seasonal influenza vaccine. Health experts suggest vaccination as a method of reducing the likelihood of being infected with the flu.

These same simple practices will also help to prevent the spread of more serious diseases. If you have questions or concerns about the spread of infection, please feel free to contact the nurse at your child's school.

District 25 Health Services Staff