

Influenza Precautions and Recommendations for Schools

School

- ✦ Review school policies, and consider revising those that make it difficult for students and staff to stay home when sick or when caring for others who are sick.
 - ✓ Implement flexible sick leave policies for students and staff.
 - ✓ Avoid the use of perfect attendance awards.
 - ✓ Cross-train staff so that others can cover for co-workers who need to stay home.

Personal Hygiene

- ✦ Single most effective way to prevent the spread of flu is to get your flu vaccine. A yearly flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease.
- ✦ Respiratory etiquette: use tissues or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and dispose of used tissues in waste receptacle.
- ✦ Hand Hygiene: Wash hands several times a day using soap and warm water for 15-20 seconds. Dry hands with paper towels or automatic hand dryers. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol may be used.
 - ✓ In school, allow regular breaks for the students and teach to wash hands.
 - ✓ Young children should be taught and assisted in washing their hands properly.
 - ✓ Restrooms should be checked regularly to ensure that soap and paper towels are always available.
- ✦ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because many germs spread this way.

In the Classroom

- ✦ Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at school, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, and hands-on learning items.
- ✦ Use general cleaning products that you normally use. Always follow product label directions.
- ✦ The flu virus can live and potentially infect a person for only 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on a surface. Therefore, specialized cleaning, including closing schools to

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clean surfaces in the building, are not necessary or recommended to slow the spread of flu, even during a flu outbreak.

- ✦ Know the baseline for absenteeism in your classroom/school. On average schools will have approximately 10% of their school absent at any given time. If there is an increase in absenteeism you will be more likely to notice when you have more kids/staff out than what is normally expected, which may indicate a flu outbreak.

If you Get Sick

- ✦ Students, parents, and staff should stay home when they are sick for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- ✦ Most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, in most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.
- ✦ Certain children are at greater risk of serious flu-related complications. If you have immune compromised or are in a high risk group and develop flu symptoms, its best to contact your medical provider.
- ✦ Emergency warning signs that indicate a child should get medical care right away include:
 - ✓ Fast breathing or trouble breathing
 - ✓ Bluish skin color
 - ✓ Not drinking enough fluids
 - ✓ Not waking up or not interacting
 - ✓ Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
 - ✓ Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worsening cough
 - ✓ Fever with rash