




STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 22, 2017
TO: West Virginia School Superintendents and School Officials
FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP 
Commissioner and State Health Officer
RE: School Closure Due to Influenza Recommendations

There has been an increase in influenza activity in several regions of West Virginia. The number of reported school outbreaks has increased. Influenza A (H3N2) viruses have been most common this season. H3N2 predominant seasons are often associated with more severe illness, especially in younger children. This memorandum is being sent to you to provide guidance in regards to school closures due to an influenza outbreak.

The following recommendations should be taken into consideration when dealing with an influenza outbreak at a school:

1. All outbreaks should be immediately reported to your local health department. A list of local health departments can be found at www.dhhr.wv.gov/localhealth.
2. Schools experiencing influenza outbreaks are strongly encouraged to educate parents, students, and staff on the importance of getting an annual influenza vaccine, frequent hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding close contact with sick people, and staying home from school or work when sick.
3. Schools should maintain routine general cleaning procedures during influenza outbreaks. Additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended to kill influenza viruses.
4. School closure is not recommended for influenza outbreaks unless there is not sufficient staff to instruct students or maintain a safe and healthy environment.
5. In the event that a school cannot maintain a healthy and safe school environment, a collective decision should be made regarding school closure through close communication with state and local school and health officials.

For questions or concerns, please contact your local health department or the Bureau for Public Health, Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services, Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at (304) 558-5358, extension 1.