

The flu season is upon us! We are seeing many more students with fevers, coughs and sore throats. The Health Department is still saying that what they are seeing is a relatively mild to moderate flu. Here is information that has been useful to families regarding the flu and illness:

Viruses are spread by large-particle respiratory droplets that are airborne (particles stay suspended in the air). Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. These droplets can be propelled up to 6 ft. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something—such as a surface or object—with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth and nose. Droplets of this virus seem to live 2-8 hours on surfaces.

Symptoms:

Fever, cough, body aches, headache, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, upset stomach

Take these steps every day to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based cleansers (65%-95%) are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread this way.
- Try and avoid close contact with others.

The CDC recommends that people with flu-like illness remain at home at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without use of a fever-reducing medication.

What should I do if I get sick?

Stay home and away from others. Staying at home means that you should not leave your home except to seek medical care. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings. If you have severe illness or you are at a high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

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| Fast breathing or trouble breathing | Not waking up or not interacting |
| Bluish or gray skin | Not drinking enough fluids |
| Severe vomiting
not want to be held | Being so irritable that the child does |
| Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough | |

We all need to use common sense. Panic and anxiety can be contagious, too. Be calm. Be prepared and have a plan for anticipated illnesses. Be responsible and stay home if you are ill.

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