

Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family from the Flu this School Year

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

1. Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
3. Stay home if you or your child is sick for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. Get your family vaccinated for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:

- Plan for childcare at home if your child gets sick.
- Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
- Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season.
- Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age and those children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.
- Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.
- Update emergency contact lists. (make sure the school has current working phone numbers to reach someone if your child becomes sick).

Steps you can take to help keep your child well.

- Educate your child to cover their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze with a tissue or into elbow.
- Do not share food or drinks.
- Wash hands frequently, esp. after using the bathroom, before eating and after recess.
- If your child is sick keep them home until they are fever free for 24 hours. Call the school or send a note the next day when they return.
- Medication is recommended to be given at home unless necessary for school. If needed to be given at school, the nurse must have a note from your doctor saying it is medically necessary for your child to take medicine at school.
- Clean all counters daily esp. in the kitchen and bathroom.

Thank you,

School Nurse