

FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE: IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE FLU

With flu season upon us, it is important that we work together to keep our children and school healthy. By keeping our children and staff flu-free, we benefit the community as a whole. Additionally, healthy students and staff miss fewer days of school, which results in less stress on our families. The following are answers to frequently asked questions about the flu and how to help protect you.



What is the flu?

The flu is caused by the influenza virus, which infects the lungs, nose and throat. The influenza virus can cause mild to severe illness and, sometimes, can lead to death.

How does the flu spread?

There are two ways to get the flu. Usually flu is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Occasionally, people can get the flu from touching a germ-infested surface.

What are the common symptoms of the flu?

Often we get confused about the symptoms of the flu and how they are different from a common cold. Knowing the symptoms of the flu is important and will help you act quickly and feel better faster.

- Common symptoms of the flu include: high fever, severe headache, muscle and body aches, exhaustion and dry cough.
- Children often have additional flu symptoms that are rare in adults, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
- Symptoms of a common cold include: stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat and hacking cough.

Don't take the flu lying down!

- If you are concerned about your flu symptoms, call your doctor early. Call your doctor immediately if you have a chronic disease. Some people may benefit from an antiviral medication.
- To be effective, antiviral medication should be taken within 12-48 hours after flu symptoms begin.
- If you have the flu, it is important for you to stay home from school, rest and drink plenty of fluids.

Remember to keep your child home until his or her temperature is normal or below 100 degrees F for 24 hours without medications and is feeling better. Any questions, contact Mrs. Forgione RN, the school nurse at ext. 123.

Simple steps for keeping healthy:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the best way to prevent yourself from getting the flu is to get a flu vaccine.

You should practice good health habits, such as:

- Washing hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Covering mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, and disposing of the tissue in a proper trash receptacle.
- Avoiding sharing drinks, water bottles or silverware with others.
- Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, toys and other commonly shared items.

Also, if someone in your household gets the flu, a doctor can prescribe a medication – called an antiviral – that can actually prevent other members of the household from catching the flu.