

Preventing the Spread of The Influenza Virus

First and most important is to get the flu vaccination. It is not too late. Even though we know that the vaccine is not quite so effective this year, it can still reduce the severity and duration of the illness.

Any person who has a nasal discharge, sore throat, headache mild muscle aches and especially if they have fever (100 F +) should be seen by a medical practitioner for flu screening. This is a nasal swab and diagnosis is made within 5 – 10 minutes. If positive, the person is likely to be given age appropriate anti-viral medication.

If diagnosed with flu, it is **extremely important that the person does not return to the school community until they have been fever free for more than 24 hours without taking an anti-fever medication (Advil, Tylenol)**. To ensure the safety of the school environment, I recommend that the anti-viral medication should be taken for at least 48 hours and the person should not have any kind of nasal discharge, frequent coughing or continuation of other symptoms.

Children should be taught to cough and sneeze into their sleeve/inside elbow if they do not have a tissue. Hand sanitizer should be used after sneezing/coughing into tissues. Used tissues should be disposed of in a bin with liner which should be emptied frequently by someone wearing disposable gloves who should wash their hands with soap and water after removing gloves.

Hard surfaces such as door handles, tables, desks etc. may be cleaned with either a 10% solution of bleach (1 part bleach to 10 parts water) or Lysol/Clorox wipes. Whichever method is used the surface should not be dried but should be allowed to dry naturally.

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