

As you all know, flu season is upon us. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the number of reported cases of the flu/influenza in Indiana is at its highest point so far this flu season. This letter is to remind you of best practices if or when your child is exposed to flu.

The flu is highly contagious and can spread from person to person by breathing in the droplets in a cough, sneeze, or runny nose that contain the flu virus. People with the flu may be able to infect others by shedding virus as early as one full day before getting sick through a period five to seven days after symptoms begin.

Signs and Symptoms of the flu may include:

The flu comes on quickly. Most people with the flu feel very tired and may have a high fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, vomiting, or diarrhea.

If you suspect that you or a family member is sick, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

Prevention

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends vaccination for everyone 6 months and older
- Hand washing with soap and water, especially before meals. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will work
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw tissues in the trash and wash hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect hard surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs, including bathroom surfaces, kitchen counters, and toys for children. Use household disinfectants according to directions.

When can my child return to school after having the flu?

Deciding to keep your child home from school is never easy. It's important for children to attend school and for some parents staying home means missing work. However, when a child is truly sick, they need to stay home in the care of an adult to get well and to prevent spreading illnesses to others.

Keep your child home if they have a fever of at least 100°F. Wait at least 24 hours after the fever is gone and 24 hours after vomiting and/or diarrhea subsides **without the use of medications** before sending your child back to school.

Treatment

The flu can be treated with antiviral drugs. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen may be taken to reduce fever and increase comfort. Avoid products containing Aspirin. People with the flu need plenty of rest and fluids.

Your child's medical information is kept confidential by the district, so please call the nurse's office if your child has been diagnosed with flu/influenza. Contact your school nurse or clinic assistant with any questions.

Please keep the school office up to date with current phone numbers so you or an alternate contact can be reached if your child becomes ill or injured at school. The following information may help you decide when to keep your child at home. "Child" refers to all school-aged children including adolescents. This information does not take the place of consulting a medical provider.