

FLU Precautions and Guidelines for Schools

The following guidelines were adapted by the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (CHHCS).

- Any employee, student, teacher or staff suspected of having the flu should stay home and not attend school.
- Wash hands several times a day using soap and warm water (if available) for 15-20 seconds (this is generally about the length of time it takes to sing the ABC's). Dry hands with paper towels or automatic hand dryers, if possible. In school, allow regular breaks for the students and teachers to wash hands. Young children should be taught and assisted in washing their hands properly. Restrooms should be checked regularly to ensure that soap and paper towels are always available.
- Students should not touch any surfaces (particularly door handles) between washing hands and eating.
- The flu can be spread from coughs or sneezes. Make sure tissues are available in all classrooms. Students and staff should cover their mouths when coughing and use a tissue when sneezing or blowing their noses. Tissues should be thrown away immediately and hands should be washed immediately (alcohol hand gels may be used in the classrooms to minimize disruption).
- Schools may be required by their local health departments to report flu absences when they reach a locally determined threshold. Reporting outbreaks assists in disease surveillance and understanding the impact on the community.
- Flu vaccine availability is limited. Staff and students (especially those with medical conditions and anyone else who wants to lower their risk of getting the flu) should get the flu shot if it is still available. Check with your health care provider or local health department on the availability of vaccine.
- Sick students should not be allowed to attend or participate in any extracurricular activities. All students and staff should avoid sharing glasses, water bottles, drinks, spoons/forks, etc.
- School buses, because of the enclosed space, may allow for easy spread of the flu. Tissues and a trash container should be available on the buses, and students should be encouraged to cover nose and mouth while coughing or sneezing. Disinfect commonly handled interior surfaces (i.e., door handles, hand rails, etc.) between loads of students, if possible.
- In the school, clean commonly used surfaces such as door handles, handrails, eating surfaces, desks, phones, etc., frequently with disinfectant. (Bleach solutions or commercial disinfectants are appropriate.)

Source: <http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/influenza.asp>