

# Influenza Preparedness for Schools

As children return to school and spend less time outdoors and more time in confined spaces, such as classrooms, there may be a rise in influenza-like illnesses.

## Tips for Parents

Flu symptoms are highly contagious, particularly when people share close quarters as children do in school classrooms. Practicing some simple prevention tips can help slow the spread of colds and flu. Please teach your children to follow these prevention tips to prevent the spread of disease:

### Preventive Measures:

**Practice good hand hygiene:** Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. For more resources on hand hygiene, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/>.

**Practice good respiratory etiquette:** Remind your child to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing, and to throw the tissue in the trash after use. Please visit [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm) for more information.

**Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth:** Germs often spread this way.

**Do not share personal items:** like drinks, food, pencils and pens.

**Ask about getting a flu shot:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that all children aged 6 months up to 19 years get a flu vaccine. Call your health care provider or the Will County Health Referral line at 815-727-8480. For more information please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm>.

**Know the signs and symptoms of the flu:** These include fever (100° or higher), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired.

**When Flu Occurs Don't send children to school if they are sick:** Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines (such as ibuprofen or Tylenol).

**Keep your sick child in a separate room:** Try as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are not sick.

**Child care:** Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school sends them home.

**Planning Ahead 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.

*Remember: please keep your child home if they have fever or other flu-like symptoms.*

We encourage all of our students to remember the three **Cs**:

**Clean** – Wash your hands frequently to prevent the spread of germs;

**Cover** – Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve, not your hand; and

**Contain** – Contain your germs by staying home if you are sick.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact your health provider, a nurse, or teachers.