

## **Too Sick for School? A Message from Your School Nurse – IT'S FLU SEASON!**

– PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD AND OTHERS!!!

Please make sure to **update your phone number, as well as emergency contact numbers** if there have been any changes, so that your child's school can reach you or another responsible adult during the day, in case your child needs medical attention. (This is an important rule to follow *whenever* your child is at school.)

Flu season is here with winter right around the corner. You don't want your child to miss school; but neither do you want to send a sick child to school to endanger others as well. *When should your child stay home?* Here are a few guidelines we ask that you follow:

Enteroviruses are associated with various clinical symptoms, from mild to severe. EV-D68 causes primarily respiratory illness although the full spectrum of disease remains unclear. EV-D68 was originally isolated in 1962 and, since then, has been reported rarely in the United States. There are no available vaccines or specific treatments for EV-D68, and clinical care is supportive.

In general, enteroviruses have various symptoms, including mild respiratory, fever, rash and neurologic illness. EV-D68 has more severe respiratory symptoms. There is no vaccine; treatment depends on the symptoms, and prevention is very important. To prevent EV-D68 and all other communicable viruses like influenza, people need to

- ☐ Wash their hands frequently
- ☐ Cover their cough/ sneezes
- ☐ Keep children home if ill
- ☐ Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- ☐ Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups and eating utensils with sick people
- ☐ Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs

If you or a family member has severe respiratory symptoms, please contact your doctor and follow his/her advice.

- **REMIND YOUR CHILD TO USE TISSUE TO WIPE THEIR NOSE, DISCARD TISSUE, AND IMMEDIATELY WASH HANDS!**
- If your child is not acting "right", has difficulty breathing, or is becoming dehydrated, it could be serious. Check with your physician right away. **REMIND YOUR CHILD TO COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES WITH THE BEND OF THEIR ARM/ INNER ELBOW – IN THEIR SLEEVE!**
- **PLEASE keep children home during the course of a fever and for an additional 24 hours after the fever has passed without fever reducers.** Your child may be carrying something **very contagious.**
- **Diarrhea and vomiting** make children very uncomfortable, and being near a bathroom becomes top priority. If your child has **repeated episodes of diarrhea and /or vomiting, consult a doctor and keep your child out of school until the illness passes**
- **Strep throat and scarlet fever** are two highly contagious conditions caused by a streptococcal (bacterial) infection. They usually arrive with a sore throat and high fever. Sometimes nausea and headache are present too. Twelve (12) to forty-eight (48) hour after the onset of scarlet fever a rash may also appear. **A child with either strep throat or scarlet fever should be kept at home and treated**

with antibiotics, as prescribed by a doctor. **After 24 hours on an antibiotic, a child is usually no longer contagious and may, with the doctor's permission, return to school.**

- **Chicken Pox**, a viral disease, is not normally life-threatening to children but is very uncomfortable and extremely contagious. If your child has a fever, is itching, and begins to sprout pink or red “spots” (with watery centers) on the back, chest, and/or face, the chances are good it’s chicken pox. **Please let the school know this important information. Keep your child home for at least a week.**
- **Measles (or Rubella)** is a viral infection that attacks a child’s respiratory system, causing a dry, hacking cough, general weakness, inflamed eyes, and fever. If these symptoms appear, keep your child at home and consult your doctor right away to avert more serious complications. **If it is confirmed as measles, please let the school know so we may be alert to symptoms appearing among other children at school.** The measles rash of tiny hard red bumps will appear on the child’s face, behind the ears, and down the body. **Your doctor may advise you to keep your child home for several days after the rash has disappeared.**
- **Conjunctivitis or pink eye** is highly contagious and uncomfortable, so take heed when your child complains of an eye or eyes burning, itching, and producing a whitish discharge. Minor cases (caused by a virus) and severe cases (caused by bacteria) require treatment with prescription eye drops. **It is best to keep your child home until your doctor says it is okay to return to school.**
- **Ear infections**, unless properly treated, can cause permanent hearing damage. Here again you should follow the 24 hour rule for fever and antibiotic therapy.
- **Lice and mites**, once brought into a home or school, can quickly produce an epidemic of itching and scratching. Lice are tiny parasites (like ticks) that thrive on the warm scalps of children and feed by sucking blood from the scalp. **Caution your child (ren) against sharing anybody else’s combs, brushes, or clothing, especially hats.** Mites are tiny insects in the same class as spiders and ticks; they irritate the skin and cause scabies. If your child becomes a “host” to lice or mites, check with your doctor or school nurse for the most effective way to disinfect your child *and* your home or environment. We have a lice plan in place, in which students are checked for lice after major holidays, in Middle and High Schools, and each Friday in Elementary Schools. **We encourage parents to check your child’s hair periodically as well. If you suspect or locate lice in your child’s hair, please notify the school nurse.**
- PLEASE BE REMINDED: **ALL WOUNDS MUST BE COVERED BY A BAND-AID/ DRESSING/ CLOTHING.** IN ADDITION, OPEN WOUNDS WITH NOTED DRAINAGE WHICH CANNOT BE CONTAINED BY THE DRESSING IS A HEALTH HAZARD AND THE STUDENT SHOULD REMAIN HOME UNTIL SEEN BY A DOCTOR AND/OR THE DRAINAGE IS CONTROLLED.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact your school nurse.

We aim for a healthy environment to increase learning and academic achievement!