

A Message from the School Nurse – March 2008

The flu has hit!!!! We have had several cases here at school. I thought it might be good to review some facts about the flu. The flu is spread from person to person through the air by coughing and sneezing. It is also spread through direct contact with infected persons. Influenza can be a very serious illness and can lead to complications such as pneumonia. It is a good time to review personal hygiene with your children, washing hands often, especially after coughing, sneezing, wiping or blowing the nose. Hand sanitizer is available in every room.

Flu can be confused with the common cold, both have symptoms which affect the throat and nose. However, influenza symptoms are usually more severe. The symptoms include stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, cough, headache, tiredness, body aches, fever and chills. These symptoms usually start 1 to 3 days after coming in contact with an infected person. Most people feel better after a few days but cough and tiredness can last for 2 weeks!!!

To recover get plenty of rest, drink fluids like juice, water and tea. Take an aspirin substitute for aches and fever, make sure it is an aspirin substitute. Never give aspirin to children or teenagers with flu like symptoms. And never give over the counter remedies without consulting with your child's physician.

Emergency symptoms to watch for in children include: high or prolonged fever, fast breathing or trouble breathing, bluish skin color, not drinking enough fluids, changes in mental status, such as not waking up or interacting, extreme irritability, seizures, symptoms which return with a high fever, or worsening of chronic medical condition, like asthma or diabetes. For these symptoms seek medical help by calling your doctor or going to the emergency room. Please remember children need to be 24 hours fever free before returning to school. Also, even though fever free, they sometimes need a day to rest.

Some additional information I wanted to pass on to parents. We will not be requiring physicals and dental forms for students entering 6th grade. However, there are some recommended immunizations for children in the middle school years so I ask you to check with your physician. If your child receives an immunization, please send me the documentation so I can update the school record.

If you have a child in pre-school entering Kindergarten, they will require a second MMR if they have not received the second dose. I will be reviewing all the pre-school charts and will send letters home if I need documentation of a second MMR (measles, mumps, rubella).

If you have any questions regarding this information, please feel free to call or e-mail.

Your School Nurse,
Deb Walters R.N.