

Respiratory Information Sheet

Recently we have recognized that an increased number of our students are out sick with symptoms of respiratory illness. Respiratory illness is easily spread from person to person. We want you to know what you can do to help prevent your child from becoming ill.

What are symptoms of respiratory illness?

Symptoms may range from mild to severe. Mild symptoms may include runny nose, sneezing, cough, body and muscle aches and sometimes fever. Severe symptoms include difficulty breathing, wheezing and worsening of asthma.

How is respiratory illness spread?

Respiratory illness is spread through close contact with infected people. Like a common cold or virus, it is likely spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. You can also become infected by touching objects or surface that have the virus on them and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

How can I protect myself and my children from becoming ill?

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers
 - Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for handwashing and does not kill some viruses
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Use good respiratory hygiene; cough and sneeze into a tissue or elbow and properly dispose of tissues. For more information about respiratory hygiene see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>
- Avoid kissing, hugging and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Stay home when feeling sick and consult your health care provider
 - Since people with asthma are at higher risk for respiratory illnesses, they should take their medicine as directed by their health care provider
- Stay up to date with immunizations, especially influenza.

If your child has symptoms of respiratory illness, consult with your health care provider. Your child should stay home until these symptoms have resolved. Children with a fever must stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.