

Student Health Services Flu Season Update January 16, 2018

Flu Season Is Definitely In Full Swing...

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has announced this week **the flu is widespread in Georgia**. More than three hundred individuals have been hospitalized with flu-related illness. **Therefore, they are encouraging if you have not gotten a flu shot yet, do not wait any longer!**

According to DPH, the predominant strain of flu circulating in Georgia and around the country is influenza A (H3N2). This strain can be particularly hard on young children, people over the age of 65 and those with existing medical conditions. H3N2 is one of the strains contained in this year's flu vaccine along with two or three others, depending on the vaccine. Dr. J. Patrick O'Neal DPH Commissioner says, "It is not too late to get a flu shot. Every individual over the age of six months should get a flu vaccine – not just for their own protection, but to protect others around them who may be more vulnerable to the flu and its complications."

Flu symptoms can vary in their intensity and from person to person, and can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. If you think you have the flu, call or visit your doctor or a healthcare provider.

Just a reminder, there are other things you can do to help prevent the spread of flu which include:

- Frequent and thorough hand-washing with soap and warm water. Alcohol based gels (hand sanitizers) are the next best thing, if soap and water is not available. The single most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of infectious illnesses is washing your hands!
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and properly dispose of used tissues. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow or arm instead of the hand (avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth – germs spread this way);
- Avoid touching your face as flu germs get into the body through mucus membranes of the nose, mouth and eyes.
- If you are sick, stay home from school or work. Flu sufferers should be free of a fever, without the use of a fever reducer, for at least 24 hours before returning to school or work. Remember, return to work or school only after symptoms have improved and after you have had no fever for at least 24 hours.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu. Viruses lurk in places you would not think about. Everyone is vulnerable to picking up viruses.
- Eat healthy food (fruits and veggies) and drink plenty of fluids;
- Make sure your vaccinations are up-to-date;

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- Take flu antiviral medications if your doctor prescribes them;
- Again, get vaccinated against the flu – flu vaccination is the best protection against the flu, and wash your hands frequently!

In Fulton County Schools, Student Health Services works in collaboration with our Registered School Nurses, Clinic Assistants, Administrators, and school staff to ensure we adhere to our guidelines for identifying, reporting, managing and preventing suspected and/or confirmed infectious illnesses. By working together, we can help reduce the transmission of the flu and other infectious illnesses in the schools and community. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Health Services at 470-254-2177 or your healthcare provider.

More information about the flu and flu vaccine can be found by logging onto www.flu.gov or visit www.dph.ga.gov.

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