

Student Health Services

Flu Season Update September 2019



Flu Season Is Upon Us...

Georgia is experiencing the onset of an early flu season with confirmed cases already reported by local health providers. Flu viruses are common each year, usually between the months of October and May. Anyone can get the flu, but it is more dangerous for infants, young children, seniors, pregnant women and those with certain health conditions. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics have stressed the importance of children receiving flu vaccines and the danger of flu to children. According to the CDC, a flu vaccine offers the best defense against getting flu and spreading it to others. Getting vaccinated can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, missed school days and workdays, and serve as a preventative for flu-related hospitalizations and deaths in children. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that the flu can cause 10 days of fever and lead to serious complications even for healthy kids. Therefore, we are sharing this information to remind us to take precautions and to work together to help prevent the spread of flu.

To ensure the safety and health of students, staff and parents, we encourage you to take proactive measures that can help reduce the spread of flu and other communicable illnesses. These precautions include:

- **Recognizing the symptoms of flu which include** (those who are ill with flu may experience some or all the below symptoms):
 - Fever or feeling feverish/chills (although not everyone with flu has a fever)
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Runny or stuffy nose
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Chills
 - Fatigue (tiredness)
 - Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting, although this more common in children than adults.

(According to the Diabetes Research Institute, for a small number of children, flu-like symptoms may be the first sign of diabetes. Symptoms of diabetes in children include nausea, vomiting, feeling very tired, heavy, labored breathing, increased thirst and hunger, frequent urination and new bedwetting, sudden weight loss and blurred vision.)

- **Encouraging students, staff and parents to get a flu vaccine.**
 - **The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year.** The recommendation is to get a flu vaccine as soon as possible. The AAP recommends that all children ages 6 month and older receive a flu shot this season.
- **Encouraging students, staff and parents to take every day preventive actions to stop the spread of germs/flu such as:**
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub/sanitizer until you can properly wash your hands.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to decrease the spread of germs.
 - Do not share personal items like combs and towels and use good personal hygiene.
 - Try to avoid close contact with others who are sick.
- **Students and staff should always stay home if they are ill.**
 - If you are sick with any flu-like illness, the CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care. Per FCS policy, a fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine before returning to school or work.
 - **Cleaning and disinfecting regularly and correctly during flu season.**
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like flu.

The following are some additional health measures you can take to stay well:

- Eat balanced nutritious meals
- Drink plenty of water/fluids
- Stay physically active but also get enough rest
- Be a smart traveler – infectious diseases are easily transmitted while traveling. Also note that certain travel destinations require travel vaccines. The CDC's website is a great resource for travel advisories.

In Fulton County Schools, we want to do everything possible to limit the spread of flu. The Office of 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. Additionally, we work closely with our local public health office, the Fulton County Board of Health, to report any unusual or increased absences due to the flu/respiratory illness. Again, by working together, we can help reduce the transmission of the flu and other infectious illnesses in schools and the local community. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Health Services at 470-254-2177 or your healthcare provider.

For additional information about the flu and flu vaccines in our community, please click the following link: <http://fultoncountyboh.org/boh/>, <https://dph.georgia.gov/flu-activity-georgia> or <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>