



Flu Season Is Just Getting Started...

Back to school means that cold and flu season is just around the corner. In fact, despite summer just ending, officials from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are already urging people to prepare for another potentially difficult flu season and to get vaccinated as soon as possible (before the flu starts spreading). The 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 and work days, and prevent 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 in healthy kids. Approximately 80% of the children who died from the flu last season were not vaccinated. It is with this mind that we are sharing this information to help prevent the spread of flu.

To ensure the safety and health of students, staff and parents, we encourage you to take the following precautions. We believe by taking these proactive measures we can 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 of 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 (use proper respiratory etiquette!).
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to decrease the spread of germs.
 - 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 or for other necessities. Per FCS policy, 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.

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 officials 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 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 visiting the CDC website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

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