



To: Georgia School Administrators
From: Georgia Department of Public Health
Subject: Influenza in Schools
Date: Jan. 11, 2019

Dear School Administrator,

It is currently influenza ('flu') season and Georgia and the United States are experiencing very high influenza activity. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. To ensure the safety and health of students, parents and faculty, the Georgia Department of Public Health encourages schools to know the signs and symptoms of influenza and the necessary steps to reduce the spread of illness.

The symptoms of flu can include:

- Fever (although not everyone with flu has a fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Tiredness
- Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

To ensure schools are doing everything possible to limit the spread of influenza or other respiratory diseases:

- **Encourage students, parents, and staff to get a yearly flu vaccine.**
 - The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each flu season. If influenza is circulating, it is a good time to get vaccinated!
- **Encourage students, parents, and staff to take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.**
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow. Wash your hands often with soap and water. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Avoid close contact with sick people.

- **Students and staff should always stay home if they are ill.**
 - Those who get flu-like symptoms should stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- **Clean and disinfect regularly and correctly during influenza season.**
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.
- **Report outbreaks (unusual or increased absences due to respiratory illness) to your local public health officials.**

Resources:

<https://dph.georgia.gov/public-health-districts>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/guidance.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>