

Influenza

Dear Parents:

There has been a case of Influenza (Flu) diagnosed in your child's classroom. Influenza is a contagious disease caused by a group of respiratory viruses called the influenza viruses. Please monitor your child carefully and notify your physician if your child develops any of the following signs or symptoms listed below.

What are the signs or symptoms?

- Abdominal pain
- Chills
- Cough
- Decreased energy
- Headache
- In young infants, croup (illness with barky cough and hoarseness), bronchiolitis (illness with wheezing and runny nose) or pneumonia
- Mild pinkeye
- Muscle aches and pains
- Nasal congestion
- Nausea and vomiting (These symptoms alone or with fever are often caused by other factors not influenza virus)
- Sore throat
- Sudden onset of fever

What are the incubation and contagious periods?

- Incubation Period: 1 to 4 days, with a mean of 2 days
- Contagious Period: from the day before signs or symptoms appear until at least 7 days after the onset of flu.

How is it spread?

- Respiratory (droplet) route: Contact with large droplets that form when a child talks, coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land on or be rubbed into the eyes, nose, or mouth. The droplets do not stay in the air, they usually travel no more than 3 feet and fall onto the ground.
- Contact with the respiratory secretions from or objects contaminated by children who carry the influenza virus.

How do you control it?

- **Frequent and careful hand washing with soap is most important.** Children and adults should cover their noses and mouths when sneezing or coughing with a disposable tissue if possible, or with your arm if no tissue is available. Wash hands after contact with soiled tissues or any soiled items and dispose of tissues after each use.

What is the treatment?

- Call your child's physician if your child has the above symptoms and fever. Viruses are not treated with antibiotics, but your physician will advise you regarding supportive care for your child while ill. Please report episodes of confirmed Flu (diagnosed by physician) to the nurse's office as soon as possible.

When can my child return to school?

- Your child may return to school when his/her symptoms have gone away, and your child is able to partake in the activities of the school day. **YOUR CHILD MAY NOT RETURN UNTIL HE/SHE IS FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT TAKING TYLENOL OR MOTRIN. NEVER GIVE ASPIRIN!!**