



FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

Influenza: What you need to know

Influenza (also called flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Flu viruses are spread in respiratory droplets caused by coughing and sneezing. They usually spread from person to person, though sometimes people become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.



Symptoms of flu include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches

The best way to prevent the flu is to be immunized against the flu. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommends Influenza vaccination for children 6 months through 18 years of age. Vaccine is available as nasal spray or injection. Immunizations are available through physicians, public health, and at many local sites. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May, so it is not too late to be immunized!

Other ways to help stop the spread of flu viruses:

- Wash hands often
- Stay home when you are sick
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth

People need to get plenty of sleep and physical activity, drink water and eat good food to help them stay healthy in the winter and all year. Be proactive in protecting your health! Discuss the flu vaccine with your health care provider to determine if it is right for you and your family. For more information, please go to <http://www.flu.gov/#> or contact your healthcare provider.