

January 8, 2013

Dear Parents/Guardians:

With the flu activity continuing to increase, here is some important information you should know:

The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot! And remember the three Cs: Cover your cough, clean your hands, and contain the illness by staying home when you are sick. Any child that has a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more should be kept home until they are fever free for 24 hours.

If/when your child becomes ill with a fever of more than 100 degrees and has a cough and/or sore throat, he or she has what is called an "influenza-like illness," or ILI. When you call to report that your child will be staying home, it is important that you tell the school this information. The school will be passing that information along to the Health Department. For the purposes of this report, personal information will not be sent to the Health Department. This, along with information gathered from hospital emergency rooms and local testing laboratories, provides a true picture of flu activity in your school and in the community.

#### What is influenza (also called flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

#### Signs and symptoms of flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- Fever\* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)

- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

*\*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

### How flu spreads

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

### Period of contagiousness

You may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

For more information you can visit [www.kanehealth.com/flu.htm](http://www.kanehealth.com/flu.htm) and [www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/)

Thank you,  
Nurse Julie