

How students can prevent the spread of influenza (flu) at school

Seasonal influenza 2017-2018

Version 1.4

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Be aware of the symptoms of flu

Flu usually presents with sudden onset of fever (temperature over 38° C/100 °F) and cough or sore throat. Other symptoms can include runny or stuffy nose, limb or joint pain, headache, vomiting or diarrhoea.

Prevent spread of flu by doing the following at all times:

1. Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Hand drying facilities at school must not be shared between people with the exception of electric hand dryers and roller towels (of the type that allows for a clean section to be pulled out for each use). Students may be asked to bring in and use their own individual towels.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of tissues immediately as household rubbish in the normal way. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
3. Do not share wind instruments. Avoid sharing pencils, crayons, pens, toys/objects where possible and, if sharing them, clean them before passing them between students.
4. If you have symptoms of flu, you should not attend school.
5. If you have suspected flu, you should remain at home for 5 days from when symptoms began.
6. If you are at higher risk for complications from flu, get the seasonal flu vaccine. See <http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Respiratory/Influenza/SeasonalInfluenza/Vaccination/>

Persons who may be at higher risk for complications of flu include:

- Those with chronic respiratory, heart, kidney, liver or neurological disease, immunosuppression (weakened immune system whether caused by disease or treatment), diabetes mellitus, haemoglobinopathies
- Children with any condition (e.g. cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injury, seizure disorder or other neuromuscular disorder) that can compromise lung function, especially those attending special schools/day centres
- Those with Down syndrome
- Those with moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorders such as cerebral palsy and intellectual disability
- Children under the age of 2 years
- People aged 65 years and older
- People on medication for asthma
- Those who are severely obese (BMI 40)
- Pregnant women

Further information

Posters:

<http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Gastroenteric/Handwashing/PostersVideos/>

<http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Respiratory/Influenza/SeasonalInfluenza/Infectioncontroladvice/>

Guidance on seasonal influenza:

<http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Respiratory/Influenza/SeasonalInfluenza/>