

The cold/flu season is officially in full swing. We have had cases of confirmed influenza within our community. We are taking steps to minimize the spread of flu in the Chehalis School District by keeping classrooms clean, isolating and sending sick students home and of course lots of hand washing. To ensure the best possible health in our school community as we embrace the cold and flu season, I do want to review a few policies.

If your child develops a fever (for school purposes fever is 100.0 F/37.8 C oral) or you think your child might have a fever, please keep them home until the fever has been gone for 24 hours with no medications. That means, if your child has a fever in the morning, they should remain home at least until the following morning. If they have a fever at night and they wake up in the morning with no fever, they still need to stay home to be sure they are well for 24 hours. We know that it is stressful for you as a parent and your child as a student to miss school, and we know that fever can last a long time, but it is imperative that this 24 hour period be observed to assure that your child is healthy and ready to return to school. The teachers and staff will support your child if they require a prolonged absence due to flu or other fever related illness. They will work with your child when they are healthy again and ready to return to school. There is no reason to return them to school before they are fever free for 24 hours. In addition, if the school calls and says your child has a fever and needs to be picked up, please come within the hour to take your child home. This is for the comfort of your child as well as to limit the time of exposure to other children and staff.

Here are a few things you can do to help prevent the spread of influenza.

- Teach your child to wash hands often with soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your child not to share personal items like drinks, food, or unwashed utensils
- Cover a cough or sneeze with an elbow or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- Know the signs of influenza. See reverse side for list of symptoms. Symptoms typically have a sudden onset and can last for several days.
- Have a working thermometer at home to monitor your family's temperature
- Eating well and getting adequate rest are also important

Schools can be an efficient incubator of illness. Keeping a virus out of our environment is important to the health of our entire school and extended community. The Centers of Disease control (CDC) and the Washington State Department of Health also recommend the flu vaccine as the best way to prevent influenza. It is still not too late. The flu season can go well into May, so getting protection now can help. Please visit the attached CDC link for more information and healthy tips. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

We hope that the remainder of the 2016-2017 school year is a healthy and happy one but we all need to work together to make that happen.

Kaitlin Dykstra, RN BSN
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Cold vs. Flu

Know the Difference

| Symptoms | Cold | Flu |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Fever | Rare | Usual – can be 100 to 102° or higher, lasting 3–4 days |
| Chills | Uncommon | Common |
| Muscle Aches and Pains | Uncommon or mild | Common – can be severe |
| Headache | Uncommon | Common - can come on suddenly and be severe |
| Feeling Tired and Weak | Sometimes - usually mild; you don't feel tired. | Common – can be moderate to severe; can last for 2-3 weeks. You can feel extreme tiredness that occurs suddenly |
| Coughing | Common - mild to moderate hacking | Common - can become severe and last for several weeks |
| Sneezing | Common | Sometimes |
| Stuffy Nose | Common | Sometimes |
| Sore Throat | Common | Sometimes |
| Chest Discomfort | Sometimes – can be mild to moderate | Common – can be severe |