



Protecting School Students and Staff from Influenza

When influenza strikes a community, it is important to implement measures to limit its spread. Influenza can spread through schools because of the crowding and overall hygiene of students.

How can influenza be prevented?

Students and staff should:

- stay home until fully recovered if experiencing influenza symptoms, such as fever and cough with sore throat, headache, muscle pains, vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- sneeze and cough into their sleeves or tissues to prevent spreading germs onto their hands and spreading it to other people.
- wash their hands often and especially:
 - after coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose.
 - before and after eating.

Post handwashing signs to serve as a reminder.

- wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, using soap, friction and warm running water.
- use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when hand washing facilities are not available.
- avoid touching their eyes and nose to prevent the spread of germs from their hands.
- use disposable one-use tissues; dispose of soiled tissues in the garbage.

What kind of cleaning can help prevent influenza?

Viruses can live on surfaces for up to 48 hours. Develop a facility routine for cleaning surfaces that are frequently touched, and equipment.

- Hard surfaces (counters, door knobs), should be cleansed at least daily and when obviously soiled, using routine cleaning solutions.

- Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment is available for cleaning (gloves and protective clothing). Hands should be washed thoroughly after removal of protective gloves and clothing.
- Handle all waste materials with gloves and with protective clothing. Line waste baskets and dispose daily. Hands should be washed thoroughly after removal of protective gloves and clothing.

How should a school respond to staff or students with influenza like symptoms?

- An ill student should be taken out of the classroom until the parent/guardian can come and get him/her. While waiting, the student should be kept in a place where he/she can be comfortable and is least likely to spread infection to others. If the student is moderately to severely ill, the parent/guardian should seek medical advice either by contacting the Provincial HealthLine at 1-877-800-0002 or phoning their physician's office for advice.
- Staff should also go home as soon as influenza symptoms appear and phone their physician for assessment and advice if moderately to severely ill.

When should a school contact Public Health?

- When there are an unusual number of ill students or staff, call **306-655-4612** to report.

Are school settings likely to be closed?

- There is not a current plan to close schools or daycares in Saskatchewan even if there is a confirmed case in the school. Disease from this new H1N1 strain in the US and Canada has been quite mild so far, similar to many respiratory viruses which come around every winter. As more information about risk and transmission patterns is available, that decision will be reassessed.

**If you have questions, please contact
Provincial HealthLine at 1-877-800-0002 or visit www.fightflu.ca.**