

# Flu Symptom Screening Tool For Parents and Caregivers

Use this questionnaire each day your child is sick with flu-like symptoms and follow the instructions for when to keep the child home and what to tell the child's school.

Does your child have:

1. Fever of 100° F or higher?  Yes  No

(Take the child's temperature before giving him/her fever-reducing medicine, like Tylenol.)

2. Sore throat?  Yes  No

3. Cough?  Yes  No



## Should I Keep My Child Home?

- If you checked "yes" for fever AND one of the other symptoms, keep your child home for at least 24 hours after his or her fever is gone without fever-reducing medicine. For many children this will be 5 to 7 days. Your child should feel well enough to participate in school before returning. If you have questions about your child's health or symptoms, call your child's doctor or clinic.
- If your child has been diagnosed by a doctor or clinic with a different disease, such as strep, follow your doctor or clinic's recommendation and school policy for when to return to school.

## What Should I Tell My Child's School?

- If you checked "yes" for fever AND one of the other symptoms, tell the school that your child is home with influenza-like illness.
- If your child has been diagnosed by a doctor or clinic with a different disease, such as strep, tell your child's school.



Vaccine-Preventable Disease Surveillance  
P.O. Box 64975  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414  
[www.health.state.mn.us/immunize](http://www.health.state.mn.us/immunize)

# Minnesota Department of Health Influenza in Schools

## What can schools do to prevent spread of influenza?

- Help promote influenza vaccination for all students, staff, and families throughout flu season.
- Be aware of flu symptoms: Fever, headache, fatigue, cough, sore throat, and body aches.

**Influenza-like illness (ILI)** is defined as a fever (at least 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit) and a cough or sore throat.

- Promote hand hygiene, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve, and staying home when sick among both students and staff.
- Make sure students and staff have tissues to cover coughs and sneezes as well as liquid soap, paper towels, and time to wash their hands.
- Routinely clean and disinfect commonly used areas and frequently touched surfaces, whether or not anyone has influenza in your school. Many bacteria and viruses can live on surfaces for some time - including those that cause flu.
- When cleaning and disinfecting, be sure to follow package instructions for contact time and dilution.

## Do schools need to provide antibacterial soap?

No. There is no need to use special antibacterial soap; regular soap is effective. Antibacterial products have not been proven to prevent the spread of infection better than plain soap.

## Should students with influenza-like illness be excluded from school?

- Yes, students and staff with influenza-like illness should stay home from school and school-based activities.
- Students and staff who become ill during the day should be immediately isolated from others and sent home.

- Students and staff can return to school 24 hours after their fever is gone without fever-reducing medication, such as Tylenol or Advil. Students and staff should also be well enough to participate in school before returning.

## Should schools close due to flu?

MDH does not recommend closing schools to prevent influenza transmission. However, your school may choose to close or dismiss students if a large number of absences prevent normal school functioning.

## When should schools report influenza-like illness in students or staff?

All K-12 schools should report to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) each day throughout the school year when they reach these thresholds:

- (For all schools, including elementary): Report when 5% or more of the total school enrollment is absent with influenza-like illness, or
- (For elementary schools only): Report if three students from one classroom are sent home or absent with influenza-like illness on a given day.

You will find reporting instructions and forms on the MDH web at [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/school/schoolsurv.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/school/schoolsurv.html)

## Where can schools get current information on influenza?

MDH has a special website on influenza for school health personnel. We recommend that you subscribe to receive email updates of it at [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/school/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/school/index.html). (Look for the small red envelope and the word "subscribe.") On this website you will find flu-related guidance, reporting forms, templates, and fact sheets.

