

December School Health Newsletter

The school nurses are seeing the usual uptick in winter illness – colds, stomach bugs and fevers. It remains important for families to keep sick kids at home, in accordance with school policy. Students cannot return to school until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours, without medication like Tylenol, Advil or Motrin. These guidelines are also good common sense for adults in the workplace. The checklist below can help families determine when to stay home and when to return to school or work.

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/07/xb/flu-symptom-check-list.pdf>

Along with the symptoms mentioned on the checklist, here are additional symptoms to stay home with:

- Communicable disease diagnosis
- A cold in the active stages – coughing, sneezing, nasal drainage
- A sore throat and/or swollen neck glands
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Acute pain that requires relief by narcotic medication
- An undiagnosed rash or skin eruption

The Newton school nurses monitor illness in the schools and are available for any questions or concerns. It's important to notify the school nurse of any diagnosed condition such as influenza or strep throat. It may seem elementary, but in conjunction with a flu vaccine, thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent all kinds of illness including the flu.

How to wash your hands:

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do **not** eliminate all types of germs and might not remove harmful chemicals.

Flu vaccination for all people age 6 months and older continues to be recommended. It's not too late get a flu shot. Call 617-796-1420 to make an appointment for vaccination with the public health nurse at City Hall.

Some information adapted from www.CDC.gov/handwashing and www.mass.gov/dph/flu