



BEEVILLE

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

A letter from your school nurse

As the 2018-2019 cold and influenza (flu) season approaches, I would like to review some measures that may help your family stay healthier this season and all year round.

FLU PREVENTION

An important measure which may help prevent flu, or lessen the severity of flu illness in children and their caregivers, is to get a seasonal influenza vaccine each year. The vaccine is available in our area at physician offices, the local health department, and local pharmacies. The local health department is open during normal business hours over the summer and can be contacted at 1800 S. Washington St. Beeville, TX 361-362-6162 for more information.

ABOUT INFECTIONS

Illnesses like colds and flu are caused by viruses that are spread from person to person via respiratory droplets. Respiratory droplets come from coughing, or sneezing and can contaminate your hands, and other objects you touch. Norovirus, the virus that causes gastroenteritis “stomach bug”, can be found in your stool (feces), and in the contents inside your stomach. It is possible for objects to become contaminated with this germ after an infected person vomits or uses the restroom. The germs can then be transferred to your hands or food. The disease is spread when the virus accidentally gets in your mouth.

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live two hours or longer on surfaces such as desks and doorknobs, and that an infected person can be contagious even before they begin to feel sick. Currently, there are no medications that can cure viruses. Some medications are available to help with the symptoms.

HANDWASHING AND HEALTH HYGIENE

The most effective way to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria is to wash your hands often. Everyone should wash their hands with soap and warm water routinely, making sure to scrub for 20 seconds and to clean under your nails. A recommendation to help your child wash long enough is to have them say a prayer, recite a poem, or sing a song such as “Happy Birthday” or “Mary had a little lamb” 2 times, or the “ABC” song one time silently to themselves while scrubbing. When the poem, prayer, or song is finished, then they have washed long enough). After rinsing with warm water, dry hands with a clean paper towel.

Please review the following healthy hygiene habits with your child and family. Encourage them to practice these habits all day every day.

- 1. Always wash your hands with soap and water:**
 - a. Before eating. Remember you can become infected with germs if they get into your mouth.
 - b. After using the bathroom.
 - c. If you have been playing with dirt or gardening,
 - d. If you have grease on your hands,
 - e. After taking care of pets,
 - f. And after touching the garbage.
- 2. Use hand sanitizer routinely (should be at least 60% alcohol based).**
 - a. Remind your child to use the hand sanitizer during class, after PE, after recess, when switching classrooms, after shopping, and after touching door knobs. (Supervise young children to ensure they do not put the alcohol in their mouth).
- 3. Cough or sneeze into the sleeve of their shirt,** or into their elbow to avoid getting respiratory droplets on their hands and possibly spreading to surfaces or people.

SHOULD MY SICK CHILD GO TO SCHOOL TODAY?

Sometimes it is difficult to decide in the morning whether a child is well enough to attend school. Call the school if you are in doubt. You can also ask yourself, "Can my child go through the day with minimal disruption to himself and others?"

The following school health guidelines should help in deciding whether your child is well enough to attend school for the day.

In the event that your child has signs and symptoms of illness such as fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, congestion, or if you have a concern about their health, it is recommended that you notify your child's physician for further instructions.

Children should NOT be at school if:

1. **They have had a fever in the last 24 hours**, or have been taking medication for fever in the last 24 hours (a fever is usually classified as a body temperature of 100° F (38 C) or higher).
2. **They have had 3 or more episodes of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea in the last 24hrs**, or have been taking medication for nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea in the last 24hrs (consult your doctor before giving or taking medication to stop diarrhea. Contact your child's doctor immediately if nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea continue for more than 24hrs. .
3. **They have multiple symptoms which are obvious of illness**, such as recent vomiting, cough, malaise, congestion, and body aches (with or without fever)
4. **They have a rash** that cannot be kept covered throughout the entire school day. These children can usually return to class if they have been cleared by their doctor, or the when the rash resolves.

***If your child is sent home from the clinic with an elevated temperature, or signs of gastroenteritis they should stay home on the following day to focus on adequate fluid intake, eating nutritious foods, and rest, as well as to protect others from exposure to the virus or bacteria that may have triggered the symptoms.**

PARTNERS IN PREVENTION

Preventing the spread of diseases is a community wide effort and should be a priority in our everyday lives. The simplest, most cost effective way to minimizing the spread of germs is to wash our hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap. The children of Beeville ISD gain the most of their education by being healthy, in class, and ready to learn every day. Together we can make that happen!

Sincerely,

Christina Hernandez, ADN RN
Beeville Independent School District

For more information and resources, visit the following websites:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/current.htm> for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention most current and up to date information regarding the current flu season.

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html> for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention information on handwashing and use of hand sanitizers.

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/fever.html> for the KidsHealth.org information regarding fevers in children.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm> for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tips for prevention the spread of infection to others when you are sick.