

Lumberton Township School Health Office

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Dear Lumberton Parents and Guardians,

We have noticed an increasing number of children coming to school with “minor” illness symptoms, such as sore throat, runny nose or stomach ache, often being sent home within hours because of more serious flu symptoms. The influenza virus often presents with subtle symptoms and quickly progresses to more severe symptoms. In fact, people who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs:

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Muscle or body aches
- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Vomiting or diarrhea (more common in young children)

If your child has any of these symptoms, ***it is very important that your child remain home from school for his or her health/safety, and to avoid further spread of the influenza virus.*** The flu virus is spread by tiny droplets made when people cough or sneeze... even through talking and touching. A person with the flu can pass on the virus beginning one day before symptoms even develop. Although people are most contagious in the first 3-4 days after the illness begins, others can still be infectious up to 5 to 7 days after the first signs of illness.

If your child shows any sign of illness, even the most seemingly minor, it is best to keep him or her home. While we understand that this is oftentimes difficult with work schedules, or the pressure students feel to take tests or turn in work on time, it is important to note that a sick child who comes to school will be sent home. ***Children who are sick with flu-like illness should stay home until they are 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medications.*** Absences are excused if they are documented with a note from a health care professional; further, district policy states that students have one extra day for each day of absence to make up any missed work.

The NJ Department of Health emphasizes the best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine every year. The DOH states that it is not too late to get vaccinated, even for this winter. In addition to getting an annual influenza vaccine, following every day preventative actions can protect your child from the flu and other contagious illnesses. Children should be taught to:

1. Wash hands frequently, especially before eating
2. Get in the habit of not touching eyes, nose or mouth
3. Not share food, drinks or utensils with others

Please keep our school environment as healthy as possible by keeping sick children home and following the above guidelines. Active flu season generally runs through mid-March. Please remain as diligent as possible.

Thank you,
Lumberton School Nurses