

Inspire Every Mind.

Cory Notestine, Executive Director
Student Success and Wellness

District 11 Staff and Families,

As we enter into peak cold and flu season, we wanted to take a moment to share some helpful tips to support staff and students' wellness this time of year. As you might know, students and staff members who are sick will not be able to perform well in school or at work and are likely to spread illness to other children and staff. Below you find information on the flu, the common cold as well as prevention efforts you can take to stay well throughout the year.

The Flu or Influenza is a virus that infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). It is spread person to person by an infected person, when they cough, sneeze or talk, sending the virus into the air. The flu virus can also land on solid surfaces like doorknobs, countertops, and desks. Touching those surfaces and then touching your eyes, mouth, or nose can transfer the virus into your body. It *does not* include stomach symptoms. Symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea are uncommon with the flu. Flu symptoms often include sudden headache, muscle/joint aches, fever (up to 104 degrees), dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, extremely tired. Most people feel better in a couple of days, but the cough and tiredness may last up to 2 weeks or longer.

The Common Cold usually begins slowly, and typically lasts to 2 - 7 days. A bad cold may last up to 2 weeks, but this is unusual. You may first notice a scratchy sore throat, followed by sneezing and a runny nose. You may get a mild cough several days later. Most people do not run a fever, but if they do, it will be . Infants can run a fever up to 102 degrees.

Tips to treat students and staff include rest and drinking plenty of liquids. Taking over the counter medications as recommended by your healthcare provider can support recovery. It is recommended not to give aspirin or students' containing aspirin to children. It is best practice to contact your healthcare provider to determine if antiviral medications would be effective for your case. Since the flu and common cold are both viruses, antibiotics are shown not to work.

Best Prevention:

1. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
2. Students and staff should stay home when sick.
3. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or sleeve.
4. Handwashing with soap and warm water (for 20 seconds or have a child sing Happy Birthday twice).
5. Wiping down common areas / hard surfaces / phones.
6. Clorox wipes kill about 90% of germs. (not recommended for children to use). Hand sanitizers (i.e., Purell) work well (99% efficient). Children 3 years of age or younger should not use hand sanitizers.
7. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.

Additional resources and tips can be found on the following sites:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/features/rhinoviruses/index.html>

We hope you stay healthy and well all year round,

The Department of Student Success and Wellness