

## **Stuart Health Office**

Nurse Tine Boss

[nurse@stuartschool.org](mailto:nurse@stuartschool.org)

609-921-2330 x4122

## **What is the flu?**

Symptoms, Spread, Prevention

### **What is the Flu?**

The flu (also known as influenza) is a contagious viral infection in your respiratory system (nose, throat and possibly the lungs) that can be difficult to differentiate from other viral infections.

### **Signs and Symptoms of the Flu**

People who have the flu often have some or all of these symptoms, which typically come on suddenly, not gradually:

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

You can be sick without a fever or experiencing any of the symptoms above. You can contract the flu even if you were vaccinated.

### **How does the flu spread?**

The flu is spread by tiny droplets sent out into the air when sick people cough, sneeze or talk. The droplets can land in the mouth or nose of people nearby. Less commonly, infection can also be passed on if people touch surfaces contaminated with the virus, and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth. A person can be contagious one day before becoming sick with symptoms and up to 5-7 days after falling ill.

### **How can you prevent the flu?**

- Get a flu vaccination
- Stay away from sick people
- Cover your cough or sneeze
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Disinfect contaminated surfaces
- Wash your hands OFTEN with soap and water, or use a hand sanitizer

**What if your child gets sick?**

CDC recommends the use of antiviral drugs. High risk groups - the very young, elderly and people with chronic diseases, or people who get very ill from the flu are prioritized. Contact your doctor as soon as possible to discuss this as the treatment should be started 1-2 days after the first symptoms.

In most cases the body will fight the infection. Keep your sick child at home until the she/he is fever-free for 24 hours without any fever reducing medication. Keep your child well hydrated. Use of fever-reducing medications can make your child a little more comfortable by relieving aches and pains and lowering the fever.

Unfortunately, we cannot avoid infections in a school environment. However, working together, we can help each other control the spread of infection.

You can read more information about the flu at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>

For questions or concerns, please call the Health Office at 609-921-2330 x4122.