January 29, 2019

Dear Superintendent:

Influenza season is in full swing and the Salt Lake County Health Department has recently seen a marked increase in influenza cases in area schools. We are asking your schools to be proactive in their approach to influenza prevention and their response to cases of illness.

The most effective approach to protecting your students and staff is four-pronged:

1. **Vaccination:** Encourage your staff and students to receive a seasonal flu vaccine every year. This year’s vaccine is well-matched to the dominant circulating strains and offers significant protection from illness. Vaccinated people who still become ill will have less severe symptoms for a shorter duration than those who are unvaccinated and become ill.

2. **Hand Washing:** Remind staff and students to engage in frequent, thorough hand washing:
   - Wash hands regularly, including throughout the school day, when you get home from school, after using the restroom, and before meals.
   - Wash with soap and warm water, and physically scrub for at least 20 seconds.
   - Hand sanitizers are not an adequate replacement for proper hand washing with soap and warm water. You can use alcohol-based hand sanitizers in addition to hand washing but they are not as effective at removing germs as washing hands.

3. **Cleaning:** Flu viruses are relatively fragile, so standard cleaning and disinfecting practices are sufficient to remove or kill them. Ensure your custodial staff’s regular duties include cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces such as door knobs/handles, light switches, computer peripherals and other technology, desks and chairs, and bathroom and kitchen surfaces. Use an EPA-registered product that both cleans (removes germs) and disinfects (kills germs). Disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a specific time (e.g., letting it stand for 3 to 5 minutes).

4. **Stay Home When Ill:** Keep ill students and staff home from work and school for the duration of their illness. If they must leave home (such as to receive medical care), encourage them to wear a mask and practice good etiquette by coughing and sneezing into a tissue or the inside of their elbow—NOT into their hands.

Attached are PDF files your schools may use to encourage proper hand washing and cough etiquette. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control also offers helpful influenza information for schools here: [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm)

The Salt Lake County Health Department is happy to assist you in your influenza prevention and response efforts. Please contact us at 385-468-4222 if our nurses and epidemiologists can help you determine if you have an outbreak situation or if you have any other disease-related concern.

Thank you for assisting us in protecting public health in Salt Lake County.

Gary Edwards, M.S.  
Executive Director

Dagmar Vitek, M.D., M.P.H.  
Medical Director

Salt Lake County Health Department promotes and protects community and environmental health  
saltlakehealth.org
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS THAT MAKE YOU AND OTHERS SICK

WHEN YOU SNEEZE OR COUGH

Always cover your **nose** and **mouth** with a tissue or the inside of your arm

Then **wash your hands** with soap and warm water

You may also **wear a mask** to protect those around you

Surgical masks are designed to prevent you from transmitting germs to others. They are not designed to prevent you from inhaling others’ germs.
DETENGA LA DISeminación de los GÉRMENES que lo enFERMAN a USTED y a los Otros

CUANDO USTED ESTORnUDA o TOSE

Siempre cubrAs eLa nariz y boca con un pañuelo desechable o sobre su brazo

Luego lavese las manos con jabón y agua tibia

Usted puede también usar una máscara para proteger a los demás a su alrededor

Las máscaras quirúrgicas están diseñadas para prevenir la transmisión de gérmenes a otras personas. No están diseñadas para prevenir la inhalación de los gérmenes de los demás.

SALT LAKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT