



November 20, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It's that time of year again. School is in full swing, the holidays are around the corner, and there always seems to be some "bug going around". The two main bugs that circulate around this time of year are influenza and norovirus.

Influenza	Norovirus
<p>What is it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus	<p>What is it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Gastroenteritis, or stomach illness, caused by a virus
<p>What are the symptoms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">FeverChillsBody achesHeadacheCoughStuffy or runny noseSore throat	<p>What are the symptoms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">NauseaVomitingDiarrhea
<p>How is it spread?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Coughing or sneezingTouching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects	<p>How is it spread?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ill individuals transfer the virus to food, surfaces, or objects when they do not wash their hands properly.
	<p>Duration: 1 to 2 days</p>

Here are some tips to help prevent getting and spreading Influenza and Norovirus at home:

- Hand washing is the number one way to protect yourself and others. **Always wash hands before** eating or handling food or ice, **and after** using the toilet, changing diapers or helping children use the bathroom, cleaning up diarrhea or vomit, or touching anything contaminated with fluids from the mouth or nose.
- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing using a tissue or your elbow.
- Do not share cups, utensils, straws, or water bottles.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects that may have come in contact with secretions from the mouth or nose. Toys that are mouthed should be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Get your annual influenza vaccination. The vaccine is recommended for everyone over 6 months of age.
- Avoid food handling duties if currently or recently ill.
- Throw away foods that have been handled or prepared by someone who is or has recently had vomiting or diarrhea unless it will be thoroughly cooked before serving.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of vomiting or diarrhea using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Keep ill children away from daycare/school for 1 full day after symptoms—fever, vomiting, or diarrhea—resolve.**

For additional information regarding influenza: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/index.html>

For additional information regarding norovirus: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/norovirus/>

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Olmsted County Public Health Services at 507-328-7500. Thank you for your help in preventing the spread of illnesses at your child's daycare.

Sincerely,

Libby Schmidt, Disease Control Specialist
Olmsted County Public Health Services