



Parents and Guardians:

You may be aware of news reports about the severity of influenza across the United States that has hospitalized many and has been associated with a higher number of deaths than in past years. The number of influenza cases are at high levels in our community. In order to decrease the potential spread in your child's school, Linn County Public Health has recommended that all students with a fever above 100.0 F be excluded from school until they are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. The 24 hour school exclusion policy will continue through the remainder of the influenza season. **If your child has a fever, whether discovered at home or school, they need to stay home until they are fever free, without medication, for 24 hours.**

What is the flu?

Influenza (the flu) is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses. There are many different influenza viruses that are constantly changing. The flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk.

Symptoms of influenza appear suddenly and often include:

- Fever of 100.4°F to 104°F, when symptoms first develop. Fever is usually continuous, but it may come and go. Fever may be lower in older adults than in children and younger adults. When fever is high, other symptoms usually are more severe.
- Body aches and muscle pain (often severe), commonly in the back, arms, or legs.
- Headache.
- Pain when you move your eyes.
- Fatigue, a general feeling of sickness (malaise), and loss of appetite.
- A dry cough, runny nose, and dry or sore throat. These symptoms may not be noticed during the first few days of the illness when other symptoms are more severe. As the fever goes away, these symptoms may become more evident.
- Symptoms can last from 5 to 7 days.

How to protect yourself and others:

- **Teach your children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing**
- **Wash hands frequently**
- **Avoid touching eyes, mouth or nose**
- **Keep your child home when they are sick**
- **Practice/encourage other good health habits like eating well, drinking plenty of fluids, getting enough sleep**
- **There are still 12 weeks of influenza season left and it is not too late to get a flu shot!!**

Although this year's vaccine is not as effective as in past years, some research suggests that the flu vaccine may help decrease the severity of symptoms you experience.

If you have any further questions, please speak with your school nurse or your health care provider.

Thank you and stay well!