

# Help Prevent the **Flu**:

## 5 Questions Every Parent Should Ask Their School



### Flu Fast Facts



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Flu viruses can cause illness from early October to late May, however seasonal flu activity most commonly peaks between December and March.



The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot every year.

- ◆ An annual flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months and older.
- ◆ Everyone should have their flu shot by Oct. 31 every year.



**The flu shot does not cause the flu.** The vaccine typically takes 2 weeks to reach full strength, so if someone is exposed to the flu virus during that time, they may still get sick.

Children share close quarters inside schools, making it easier for them to spread germs and get sick. Schools therefore have a big role to play in flu prevention education, and safely managing and containing flu outbreaks when they occur.

## Questions to Ask Your Principal About Your School's Flu Prevention Practices

### 1. Does our school have a full-time nurse?

**TIP** Many schools still do not have a full-time nurse, so all staff should be taught the signs and symptoms of flu, emergency warning signs, high-risk groups, and what to do to in the event of an outbreak (e.g., separate sick students and staff from others until they can be picked up.)

### 2. Does our school provide information to families on where to get the flu shot?

**TIP** HealthMap Vaccine Finder ([vaccinefinder.org](http://vaccinefinder.org)) is a free, online service where users can search for locations that offer immunizations.

### 3. What is our school's policy on children with the flu returning to school?

**TIP** It is recommended that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

### 4. How often are "germ hot spots" like desks, chairs, doorknobs and bathrooms disinfected?

**TIP** Germs can last on some hard surfaces for up to 48 hours, yet are relatively fragile, so standard cleaning and disinfecting practices are enough to remove or kill them. Daily disinfecting on surfaces and objects that are touched often with products like Lysol Disinfectant Spray helps to remove germs, try it on things like desks, countertops, doorknobs, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys. Cleaning specific areas of the school daily, including bathrooms, is also recommended.

### 5. How are students educated on how to avoid the spread of germs and prevent flu?

**TIP** Students and staff should be taught, and reminded e.g., posters, take home fliers), to stay away from people who are sick; cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue or bent arm; wash their hands often with soap and water for 15-20 seconds; not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth; and to stay home when sick.



# Cleaning Protocols for Germs in the Classroom



As we're in the midst of cold and flu season, it's time for us to be even more conscious of the harmful germs that pop up this time of year—which means stepping up your cleaning conduct and approaching germs in the classroom and at home the right way. To understand how to properly kill bacteria on the surfaces teachers and students encounter every day, it's important to recognize how they got there and how to keep them at bay. Here are three **Healthy Habits** tips from Lysol and the National Parent Teacher Association to keep in mind this time of year:

## **Know the difference between cleaning and disinfecting.**

According to the CDC<sup>1</sup>, cleaning and disinfecting are part of a broad approach to preventing infectious diseases in schools. But what is the difference between these two methods?

- ◆ **Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities** from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
- ◆ **Disinfecting kills germs** on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using specialized products to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection. Lysol Disinfectant Spray and Lysol Disinfecting Wipes can be used to eliminate germs on commonly-touched hard and soft surfaces.

## **Don't underestimate the impact of germs on a classroom desk.**

According to a recent research study led by Yale University and the University of Tulsa, harmful bacteria and fungi are commonly discovered in indoor environments. What's more? Our bodies are common sources for bringing them in<sup>2</sup>. Taking it a step further, when the researchers specifically explored classrooms and desk surfaces, their work revealed that keeping the desks clean significantly reduced the bacteria found on surfaces. A study by the University of Arizona reported that uncleaned classrooms, as opposed to those cleaned daily with a disinfectant, result in students who are more likely to be absent due to illness<sup>3</sup>. A more recent study published by researchers from University of Florida reported, the frequently touched surfaces of a classroom that are cleaned daily in the morning contained a cold causing virus, which highlights redeposition of the virus post-cleaning, an ineffective cleaning regimen used and the need to disinfect high-touched surfaces multiple time during the day<sup>4</sup>. Lysol Disinfecting Wipes kill 99.9% of germs including the cold and flu virus, which can live on hard surfaces for up 48 hours a day.

## **Remember that kids bring germs home from school, too.**

Just as children can bring germs into the classroom, germs can also be transmitted from school to home— consider your child's backpack that sits on the school bathroom floor and then on your kitchen countertop, or the classroom door knobs your child touches before they use the television remote at home. Cleaning practices at home are just as critical as those that should be practiced in the classroom. After all, the places that need the most cleaning are also the places your family spends the most time—whether that's in the house or school!

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): How to Clean and Disinfect Schools to Help Slow the Spread of Flu, July 31, 2018

<sup>2</sup>Journal of Applied Microbiology: The reestablishment of microbial communities after surface cleaning in schools

<sup>3</sup>The Journal of School Nursing: Occurrence of Bacteria and Viruses on Elementary Classroom Surfaces and the Potential Role of Classroom Hygiene in the Spread of Infectious Diseases

<sup>4</sup>American Journal of Infection Control: Isolation and identification of human coronavirus 229E from frequently touched environmental surfaces of a university classroom that is cleaned daily



## Beat the Bug: Tips to Help Prevent the Flu

### WHAT IT TAKES TO PROTECT™



Every day a child is absent from school, they miss out on valuable educational lessons. Taking these five simple steps for staying healthy during flu season can help stop germs from spreading—and children from missing school due to illnesses like cold and flu.

#### TIP

#### 1. Get your flu shot.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months and older. It's the first and most important way to prevent flu.

#### TIP

#### 2. Help prevent the spread of germs.

Help protect yourself from contagious illnesses:

- ◆ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- ◆ Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- ◆ Remind children to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- ◆ Send supplies such as box top eligible Lysol Disinfecting Wipes & Lysol Disinfectant Spray to your child's classroom for disinfecting germ hot spots like desks, chairs, door knobs and bathrooms. Lysol Disinfectant Spray kills cold and flu viruses\* on hard surfaces.\*\*

#### TIP

#### 3. Avoid sick people and stay home if you are sick.

To stay healthy, it's important for children to avoid other students who are coughing or sneezing, and to stay home if they're sick.

#### TIP

#### 4. Reinforce healthy habits at home.

As a parent, you can help fight the spread of germs by diligently cleaning and disinfecting countertops and frequently-touched surfaces like doorknobs and light switches. Also, disinfect items that your child bring home from school—such as backpacks—with products such as Lysol Disinfectant Spray to help prevent germs from spreading to other surfaces in the home.





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#### 3. What is our school's policy on children with the flu returning to school?

**TIP** Schools should avoid Awards for Perfect Attendance, as this discourages students and staff from staying home when sick. It is recommended that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

#### 4. How often are "germ hot spots" like desks, chairs, doorknobs and bathrooms disinfected?

**TIP** Flu can last on some hard surfaces for 48 hours, yet are relatively fragile, so standard cleaning and disinfecting practices are enough to remove or kill them: daily cleaning of surfaces and objects that are touched often with soap and water to remove germs, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys. Daily disinfecting specific areas of the school, like bathrooms, is also recommended.

#### 5. How are students educated on how to avoid the spread of germs and prevent flu?

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