



Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

February 8, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health and the area schools are continuing to see an increase in absenteeism related to illness. Complaints of fever, strep throat, influenza, vomiting, and diarrhea are being reported to schools throughout the county. With the increase in illnesses this time of year we thought it would be beneficial to reach out to parents to provide some helpful information.

Important steps to stop the spread of illness:

- **STAY HOME** if you are sick. You or your child should not engage in any activity outside the home while sick. This includes staying home from work or school, no traveling, no shopping, and no after school activities or athletic events.

You may **ONLY** return to these activities after the following:

- ✓ You have been fever free for 24 hours (without the use of a fever reducing medication).
 - ✓ You have not vomited or had diarrhea for the last 24 hours.
- **PROPER HANDWASHING** is the key to prevent the spread of all germs. Use soap and water and scrub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds. Teach children the importance of good handwashing by providing them with soap and water and encouraging them to sing the happy birthday song twice while washing their hands.
 - **KEEP YOUR HANDS AWAY FROM YOUR FACE**. Teach children to keep their hands away from their eyes, nose, and mouth to prevent germs from entering their bodies.
 - **COVER YOUR COUGH**. Teach children to cover their cough or sneezes by coughing or sneezing into their elbow or shoulder.
 - **RAMP UP ON CLEANING**. Frequently clean common surfaces such as door knobs and counter tops with a chlorine bleach solution or other disinfectant.
IF VOMITING AND/OR HAVING DIARRHEA, immediately remove and wash any linens or clothing that may have become soiled with diarrhea or vomit. Immediately disinfect any surfaces contaminated with diarrhea or vomit using a bleach solution or other disinfectant effective against norovirus.
 - **DO NOT SHARE EATING UTENSILS OR DRINKING GLASS**. Some illnesses can be spread even before symptoms appear and people can be contagious even for days after they are feeling better.

- **GO TO THE DOCTOR.** If you suspect that you or your child has influenza or strep throat, contact your health care provider.
- **GET THE FLU VACCINE.** The flu vaccine is still available and is your best protection from influenza. While the flu vaccine may not be 100% effective, if you do contract influenza after being vaccinated your symptoms are believed to be milder and the duration of illness shorter.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health at 641-421-9300.

Sincerely,

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Cerro Gordo Public Health
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