

Action Steps for Teachers to Prevent the Spread of Flu

Take the following steps ALL the time and not only during a flu pandemic to help keep your students and yourself from getting sick with flu.

- ▶ Educate and encourage students to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Also, provide them with easy access to tissues. Remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.
- ▶ Remind students to practice good hand hygiene and provide the time and supplies (easy access to running water and soap or alcohol-based hand cleaners) for them to wash their hands as often as necessary. Be a good role model by practicing good hand hygiene and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- ▶ Keep an eye out for sick students and send them to the school health office for further evaluation. Sick people should stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- ▶ Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, door knobs, keyboards, or pens with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- ▶ Teachers should also stay home when sick. Stay home until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- ▶ If you are pregnant, have asthma, diabetes, or other conditions that put you at higher risk for complications from the flu, you should speak with your doctor as soon as possible if you develop symptoms of flu-like illness. People at high risk of flu complications who develop flu can benefit from early treatment with antiviral medicines.
- ▶ If you have children, plan ahead for child care if your child gets sick or his or her school is dismissed.
- ▶ Be prepared in case the flu becomes more severe.
- ▶ Develop options for how schoolwork can be continued at home (e.g., homework packets, Web-based lessons, phone calls), if school is dismissed or your students are home because someone in their household is sick.
- Be prepared for sick students or staff staying home for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
- Allow high-risk students to stay home. These students should make this decision in consultation with their physician or other health professional.
- Find ways to increase social distances (the space between people) in your classroom. For example, you might rearrange desks so that there is more space between students, consider canceling classes that bring students together from different rooms, or postpone class trips.