



Communicable Disease Prevention and Control
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EXPOSURE NOTICE: RESPIRATORY INFECTION

Date Issued: _____

Dear Parent, Legal Guardian, or Staff,

Students and staff may have been recently exposed to a **respiratory infection** such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19. We are providing the information below so you know what steps you can take to protect yourself and others. This information does not replace talking with your doctor if you become sick. ***If you or your child have symptoms, please seek diagnosis and treatment from a healthcare provider as soon as possible.***

RESPIRATORY INFECTION: Respiratory illness caused by viruses or bacteria that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Some people, such as young children and older adults, are at higher risk of serious complications from respiratory infection. There are vaccines that can protect you from many respiratory infections.

What are the symptoms? Symptoms may include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, and tiredness.

How is it spread? Most respiratory infections are spread by breathing in germs that spread through the air when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes. They can also be spread if someone touches surfaces that have germs on them and then touches their nose or mouth.

When do symptoms start? Depending on the germ causing the infection, may range from days to weeks.

Do staff or children need to stay home if symptoms develop? Yes, stay home if you have symptoms. Call your doctor if you or your child start to feel worse or have trouble breathing. You should also talk to your doctor about testing and treatment options if you, your child or someone you live with is at higher risk for serious illness because of a medical condition, weak immune system, or age (50 years or older).

When can staff or children go back to work, school, or childcare? If the child or staff member is diagnosed with a specific respiratory illness, they should talk to their doctor about when they can return. Otherwise, the child or staff member can return when they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, other symptoms are getting better overall, and they can meaningfully participate in routine activities. Wear a well-fitting mask for five days after returning.

How is respiratory infection prevented?

Getting the flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines is the best way to protect yourself and your family from serious illness from respiratory infections. Everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated should stay up-to-date on their vaccines and get their flu vaccine every year before winter respiratory virus season starts. You should also wash your hands often, stay home and call your doctor if you feel sick, and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Wearing a mask can also slow the spread of respiratory infections, especially in crowded indoor spaces.

For additional information, visit [cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses).