

# Help Prevent the Flu:

## 5 Questions Every Parent Should Ask Their School



### Flu Fast Facts



The flu can affect anyone, young or old, at any time—even otherwise healthy individuals.



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.