

# Ways to Prevent and Manage Communicable Diseases in Schools

Common illnesses include:

	<b>COMMON COLD</b>	<b>INFLUENZA (“THE FLU”)</b>	<b>GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS (“STOMACH FLU”)</b>
<b>SYMPTOMS</b> *Almost always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Runny or stuffy nose*</li> <li>▪ Sore throat*</li> <li>▪ Cough*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fever*</li> <li>▪ Cough*</li> <li>▪ Fatigue</li> <li>▪ Muscle aches</li> <li>▪ Sore throat</li> <li>▪ Headache</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nausea and vomiting*</li> <li>▪ Diarrhea*</li> <li>▪ Abdominal cramping*</li> <li>▪ Mild fever</li> <li>▪ Headache</li> <li>▪ Muscle aches</li> <li>▪ Fatigue</li> </ul>
<b>ONSET TIME</b>	Gradual	Quick	Quick

## PROMOTE AND FACILITATE HANDWASHING

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Promote hand hygiene in your school by:

- Ensuring that washrooms and kitchen areas are regularly stocked with liquid pump soap and paper towels. Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% ethyl alcohol) is an acceptable method of hand hygiene as long as hands are not visibly soiled. Hand sanitizers are not effective against certain viruses (such as Norovirus).
- Posting instructional signage about hand hygiene in kitchens and washrooms.
- Educating staff/students about cleaning hands properly, thoroughly and frequently.
- Recommending students clean their hands prior to eating and after outdoor activities.
- Promoting hand hygiene prior to any food preparation and handling including parents, volunteers, staff and students.
- Teaching children in a relaxed and fun manner. Singing the alphabet or a hand washing song can be a motivator for both of you and is easy to incorporate into hand hygiene routines.

## PROMOTE AND FACILITATE ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION

Schools can promote routine immunization by:

- Providing printed literature on routinely scheduled immunizations for staff and parents. Information is available at [www.immunizebc.ca](http://www.immunizebc.ca).
- Promoting the Kids Boost Immunity (<https://immunizebc.ca/iboostimmunity-kidsboostimmunity>) program.
- Ensuring staff are up to date with their own immunizations, and know their own immunity status, with respect to communicable diseases such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B and pertussis.
- Communicate and facilitate student attendance at immunization clinics held at the schools.
- Advocate, educate and dispel common myths about immunization.
- Seek out and direct others to seek out accurate information at reputable health agencies.
- Reminders to staff through memos or with fall pay stubs to get their flu shot to protect their health for the upcoming flu season.

## ASK PEOPLE TO STAY HOME IF SICK

Schools can prevent the spread of communicable diseases by promoting a “stay home if you are sick” policy for staff, students and volunteers. People who have had symptoms of gastrointestinal illness (vomiting and/or diarrhea) should also stay home for an additional 48 hours after their symptoms resolve.

## ASK PEOPLE TO COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES

Colds, influenza and many other respiratory viruses and bacteria can spread by direct and indirect contact with large respiratory droplets. To prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:

1. Promote the message that people should cough and sneeze into their shirt sleeve or into a clean disposable tissue, and wash hands immediately afterwards.
2. Provide adequate supplies of hand hygiene products, facial tissues and garbage cans.
3. Provide printed information (brochures, posters, etc.) about influenza to parents and staff.

## Further information on preventing communicable diseases

1. A Quick Guide to Common Childhood Diseases (BC Centre for Disease Control): [http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/Other/Epid\\_GF\\_childhood\\_quickguide\\_may\\_09.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/Other/Epid_GF_childhood_quickguide_may_09.pdf)
2. BC Routine Vaccination Schedules: <http://immunizebc.ca/vaccine-schedules>
3. Handwashing poster: [https://northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/health-information/health-topics/school-youth-health/documents/proper-handwashing.pdf](https://northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/health-information/health-topics/school-youth-health/documents/proper-handwashing.pdf)
4. Hand washing information: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/tv7076spec> and <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/hlbc/files/documents/healthfiles/hfile85.pdf>
5. British Columbia teacher resources for handwashing, kindergarten to grade 3: <http://www.dobugsneeddrugs.org/educational-resources/k-gr3-british-columbia-curriculum/>  
**Note:** Health professional students may be available in some communities to help deliver this curriculum. Inquiries should be sent to Kate O'Connor at the BC Centre for Disease Control ([Kate.OConnor@BCCDC.ca](mailto:Kate.OConnor@BCCDC.ca)).
6. Information on cleaning to prevent the spread of infections at school: [https://northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/health-information/health-topics/school-youth-health/documents/cleaning-disinfecting-schools.pdf](https://northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/health-information/health-topics/school-youth-health/documents/cleaning-disinfecting-schools.pdf).
7. Influenza prevention posters (multiple languages): <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>
8. Influenza information, including posters: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/pandemic-influenza/education-and-awareness-tools> and <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/flu-season>
9. Healthlink BC: [www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca) (or call 8-1-1) for inquiries about a wide range of health topics