

Seasonal influenza

Influenza season has started in Queensland

One third of all flu cases and hospital admissions this year have been reported in the last two weeks (as of 11 August 2014).

Adults aged 30 – 49 years have been most affected by flu so far this year. School staff are reminded of the importance of annual flu vaccination.

The number of flu cases across all ages, including school aged children, can be expected to continue to rise over the coming weeks.

Protect staff and children

Schools, especially boarding schools are prone to experiencing rapid transmission of flu. Now is the time to review infection control practices and promote key flu prevention and control messages.

Resources to assist with promoting awareness of flu prevention and control are available at www.health.qld.gov.au/flu

Key actions to help prevent and control flu outbreaks

- **It is not too late to vaccinate**

Staff and children should be vaccinated for flu every year.

Remind and encourage seasonal influenza vaccination for any person aged six months or older.

- **Staff, children and parents should always practice and promote good hand and respiratory hygiene.**

Ensure your school has available and accessible facilities to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

The importance of frequent hand washing with soap and water followed by thorough hand drying using a single-use towel should be reinforced and promoted. Alcohol based hand gel/wipes can also be used. However, these products are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

Ensure coughs and sneezes are covered, preferably with a disposable tissue. Having tissues and rubbish bins readily available can help.

- **Keep classroom environments clean**

Some organisms can remain viable for 24 hours after landing on hard surfaces. Increased environmental cleaning will help interrupt disease transmission.

Strict attention should be paid to cleaning—desks, chairs, doorknobs, taps, computers and equipment.

- **Staff, visitors and children should stay home if sick.**

Staff and children with flu-like symptoms—fever, dry cough, muscle and joint pain, tiredness, extreme exhaustion, headache, sore throat and stuffy nose—should stay at home.

Staff and children who present unwell with fever and other flu-like symptoms while at school should be sent home. Seek early medical advice if concerned.

If you have any questions please contact your local public health unit

www.health.qld.gov.au/cdcq/contacts.asp

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