



Student Health Services Widespread Flu in Georgia January 2020



Flu Season Is in Full Swing...

Unfortunately, Georgia is experiencing widespread flu. According to the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), the predominant flu virus currently circulating is a B/Victoria strain that doesn't usually occur until the end of the flu season, in early spring. Although flu B viruses can infect anyone, they generally strike children and young adults more than the elderly. Vaccination is the best prevention against the flu for all ages, and the B/Victoria strain is included in this season's vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), DPH and other health officials are encouraging everyone to protect yourself and prevent the spread of flu. They are stressing, if you have not gotten a flu vaccine yet, do not wait any longer. It is not too late!

"Every individual over the age of six months should get a flu vaccine – not just for their own protection, but to protect others around them who may be more vulnerable to the flu and its complications," says Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., DPH commissioner. "It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies that protect against flu to develop in the body, so now is the time to get a flu shot."

Flu symptoms and their intensity can vary from person to person, and can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. If you think you have the flu, call or visit your doctor. There are other things you can do to help prevent the spread of flu – these measures include:

- Frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and warm water. Alcohol based gels are the next best thing if you don't have access to soap and water.
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow or arm to help prevent the spread of the flu.
- Avoid touching your face as flu germs can get into the body through mucus membranes of the nose, mouth and eyes.
- If you are sick, stay home from school or work. Flu sufferers should be free of a fever, without the use of a fever reducer, for at least 24 hours before returning to school or work.
- If you are caring for a sick individual at home, keep them away from common areas of the house and other people as much as possible.

To ensure the safety and health of students, staff and parents, we encourage you to take these precautions. We believe by taking these proactive measures we can reduce the spread of flu and other communicable illnesses.

In Fulton County Schools, we will continue to do everything possible to limit the spread of flu. The Office of Student Health Services works in collaboration with our Registered School Nurses, Clinic Assistants, Administrators, and school staff to ensure we adhere to our guidelines for identifying, reporting, managing and preventing suspected and/or confirmed infectious illnesses. Additionally, we work closely with our local public health office, Fulton County Board of Health to report any unusual or increased absences due to the flu/respiratory illness. Again, by working together, we can help reduce the transmission of the flu and other infectious illnesses in the schools and community. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Health Services at 470-254-2177 or your healthcare provider.

More information about the flu and flu vaccine in our community, visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/flu-activity-georgia> or <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>