

10 top tips for Influenza outbreak

1 Take action

When you have **15% or more of the total School roll (including staff)** off school it is deemed an outbreak – please contact RPH by email on healthprotection@huttvalleydhsb.org.nz or phone on (04) 570 9002. We can discuss what support and steps are needed to control the outbreak.

- **To calculate % of people sick:** Number of people sick (children & staff) ÷ total School roll x 100 = % of people sick

2 Protect others

Isolate and send sick children home. Keep sick children and staff away from the School until they have been **free of symptoms for at least 48 hours after symptoms have stopped. This type of illness lasts 3-4 days but can be up to 7 days.**

3 Share the load

Communicate with parents and caregivers about the illness circulating in the school community, **(RPH can support with information and letters)**. Ask parents to inform the school of their child's absence and symptoms; even if child absence is due to other reasons other than sickness. Schools should ensure contact details for their parents are up-to-date in case of having to contact parents to collect sick children.

4 Keep it clean

Increase daily cleaning of regularly 'high touch' surfaces (e.g. door handles) regularly during the day and at the end of the day. Also inform your cleaners and check they are also using bleach.

5 Bleach blitz

Replace cleaning products with bleach/chlorine products. Make a **new bleach solution daily** using **either** of the following formulas:

- Make a **bleach solution at 1:10 ratio** (1 part bleach and 9 parts water) or,
- To make 1 litre = 50ml of bleach and add water to make 1 litre or,
¼ cup of bleach and add 4 cups of water
- To make **10 litres** = 500ml (2 cups) of bleach and add water to make 10 litres

6 Safe play

Think about discontinuing or attending interschool activities while your school is experiencing absenteeism above 15 % due to influenza to reduce the spread within the community.

7 Preventing the spread of Germs

When children are coughing and sneezing encourage them to cover their mouth and nose with tissues. Place used tissues in a covered bin or plastic bag. If there are no tissues available encourage children to cough or sneeze into their elbow or upper sleeve, not their hands. Remember to wash hands afterwards.

8 Hands, hands, hands

Clean hands are the single most important factor in preventing the spread of germs. Washing hands for a least 20 seconds with soap and warm water and dry them for 20 seconds with a dry towel or paper towel. Alcohol-based hand rub can also be used. Hand washing with soap and water is more effective than using alcohol gels alone. Remind children hands should be washed before preparing food and eating after coughing, sneezing, blowing their nose, and visiting the toilet. A good idea is to have hand washing reminder signs and stickers throughout the school buildings and or hand sanitising stations. Posters accessible at www.rph.org.nz/influenza-education

9 Protect yourself

Staff should wear disposal personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks, gloves and plastic apron when cleaning up vomit or diarrhoea. Throw out after use.

10 Vaccination

Influenza vaccine is recommended for adult and children to stop them getting sick and reducing flu spread in the community.

Please visit the Regional Public Health website www.rph.org.nz for more information, downloadable posters, illness log template and further links to Ministry of Health resources.