



## How students can prevent the spread of influenza (flu) at school

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### Be aware of the symptoms of flu

Flu usually presents with **rapid onset of fever** (temperature of 38°C/100°F or over) and cough or sore throat. Other symptoms can include runny or stuffy nose, limb or joint pain, headache, vomiting or diarrhoea.

### Prevent spread of flu by doing the following at all times:

1. Practice good [hand hygiene](#) by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Hand drying facilities at school must not be shared between people with the exception of electric hand dryers and roller towels (of the type that allows for a clean section to be pulled out for each use). Students may be asked to bring in and use their own individual towels. Where these facilities are not readily available use alcohol based hand gel.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw your tissue in the bin. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow not into your hands.
3. Do not share wind instruments. Avoid sharing pencils, crayons, pens, toys/objects where possible and, if sharing them, clean them before passing them between students.
4. If you have symptoms of flu, you should not attend school when you have symptoms.
5. If you have suspected flu or flu, you should remain at home until you are well enough to return usually for 5 to 7 days from when symptoms began. Do not return to school if you have a fever i.e. temperature of 38°C/100°F or over.
6. If you are at higher risk for complications from flu, get the seasonal flu vaccine. See [HSE Flu information for people in at risk groups](#)

## Who should be vaccinated against flu?

Persons who may be at higher risk for complications from flu should be vaccinated. These include:

- Those with chronic respiratory, heart, kidney, liver or neurological disease, immunosuppression (weakened immune system whether caused by disease or treatment), diabetes mellitus, haemoglobinopathies
- Children with any condition (e.g. cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injury, seizure disorder or other neuromuscular disorder) that can compromise lung function, especially those attending special schools/day centres
- Those with Down syndrome
- Those with moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorders such as cerebral palsy and intellectual disability
- Children under the age of 2 years
- People aged 65 years and older
- People on medication for asthma
- Those who are severely obese (BMI 40)
- Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy

### Further information

#### Posters:

<http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/influenza/seasonalinfluenza/infectioncontroladvice/respiratoryhygieneposters/>

<http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Gastroenteric/Handwashing/PostersVideos/>

#### Guidance on seasonal influenza:

<http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Respiratory/Influenza/SeasonalInfluenza/>