



Public Health Notice

December 17, 2018

Dear parents and/or guardians:

Over the past two weeks, many schools in Boulder County have reported a higher than normal number of students missing school because of influenza (flu), strep throat, other respiratory illnesses, or stomach illness.

To keep your family healthy, watch for signs and symptoms of each illness:

- **Strep throat:** Sore throat; pain when swallowing; fever; red and swollen tonsils, sometimes accompanied by white patches.
- **Flu:** Fever (or feeling feverish), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, or fatigue. Common colds can have similar but less severe symptoms and usually do not include fever.
- **Pertussis (whooping cough):** Coughing fits, vomiting after coughing fits, and rapid coughing followed by a high-pitched "whoop" sound.
- **Stomach bug:** Vomiting and/or diarrhea, leading to dehydration.

Influenza, strep throat, other serious respiratory illnesses like respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and pertussis (or whooping cough) are spread by coughing, sneezing, or unclean hands. Stomach bugs spread very quickly. To help stop the spread of germs:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and teach your children to do the same. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow instead of into your hands.
- Put used tissues in the wastebasket.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. To stop the spread of stomach bugs, you must wash your hands! **Hand sanitizer does not kill stomach viruses.**

Speak with your child's health care provider for advice about prevention and treatment for these illnesses. You may also review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) influenza guide for parents at www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/flu-guide-for-parents-2018.pdf.

If your children become ill, please keep them home from school using the following guidance:

- **Flu-like symptoms:** Keep students out of school for at least 24 hours after their fever or signs of fever (e.g. chills, feeling very warm, flushed appearance, or sweating) has ended without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- **Stomach bug:** Keep students out of school for 24 hours after the last time they vomited and/or had diarrhea.
- **Strep throat:** Keep students out of school until after they have taken appropriate antibiotics, such as penicillin or amoxicillin, for 24 hours.
- **Pertussis (whooping cough):** Keep students out of school until they have taken their full prescription of antibiotics (usually 5 days of azithromycin) or they can no longer spread the disease (e.g. they have been coughing for more than 3 weeks).

If you have any questions, please call Boulder County Public Health at 303.413.7523. Individuals who receive Medicaid benefits can receive free flu prevention benefits. Learn more at www.BoulderCountyShots.org; click on "Clinic Information" or call 303-413-7799 to make an appointment.