



Astoria School District 1C

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Letter for parents and guardians regarding increased illness of students

Astoria District staff has seen an increase in the illness of students and would like to provide the following information on symptoms:

What is flu? Flu is a contagious respiratory illness that is caused by a virus. It is thought to be spread by droplets made when people cough, sneeze or talk. It is also possible to transmit flu by touching a surface or object that has the flu virus on it, and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes. The average incubation period for flu is 2 days but can range between 1-4 days. Those with flu can infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop to 5 to 7 days **after** becoming sick.

Symptoms: body aches, cough, fever (100 °F or higher), sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, feeling very tired, vomiting or diarrhea. Not everyone that has flu has all of these symptoms.

How serious is it? The severity of flu is unpredictable and can vary from person to person. Certain people are at a higher risk of complications from flu. These include young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease) and the elderly. Complications can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infection, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions.

Prevention: The flu vaccine is the best way to protect you and those around you. The vaccine is proving to be 60% effective protecting against this year's circulating strains of the virus. It's important for everyone 6 months and older to receive the vaccine. It takes 2 weeks before the vaccine will be fully protective. It's never too late to get the vaccine.

If you think your child has the flu, the following will help you and help prevent others from getting sick:

- **Stay home when sick.** Maintain distance from other people to prevent the spread of illness.
- **Don't return to work or school** for 24 hours after fever has resolved without the aid of fever reducing medicines (e.g., Advil or Tylenol)
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Wash hands often** with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also helpful in reducing the spread of the flu.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Wash hands after blowing the nose or coughing into a tissue and dispose of tissues after use.
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth** to prevent the spread of germs.