

Health Update

February 26, 2020

As we move into the late weeks of winter our school nurses are seeing cases of colds, flu, and strep throat among the student population. Front and center in the news these days is information regarding the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This is an emerging and rapidly evolving illness first detected in Wuhan City, China. The coronavirus has now been detected in 37 locations internationally, including the United States. Symptoms of coronavirus may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. These symptoms are very similar to symptoms of the flu, therefore, it is important that individuals check in with their primary care physician if they are experiencing signs of illness. For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.

Illness prevention is the first line of defense. The following are recommended measures that can lower the risk of illness, including COVID-19:

- Frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is recommended.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean frequently touched objects and surfaces with a disinfectant product.
- Avoid sharing of drinking cups, food, and other personal items.
- Stay at home if you are ill to minimize the transmission of illness and disease.

It is important that parents communicate with their child's teacher if they are out with illness.

Students should remain at home from school with the following symptoms of common illness or disease:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or greater. Students should be fever-free without use of a fever-reducing medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea. Students should remain at home until they have stopped vomiting for at least 24 hours and are able to tolerate fluids and solid foods.
- Sore throat that is accompanied by fatigue, body aches, and fever.
- A persistent/disruptive cough lasting for more than a few days or with fever.
- Eye discomfort with itching, redness, pain, and drainage.
- Skin rash suggestive of a communicable disease.

We request a physician note if your child has seen a physician and been out with a communicable disease. If the illness has been accompanied by a rash, we ask that any blisters or open sores be healed before returning to school.

Presently, the evolving path of the coronavirus is difficult to predict. The Ledge Light Health District and the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health are available to assist us with any emergency planning as needed. Our intent is to stay current with the information and guidance given by the CDC, the Connecticut Department of Public Health and Ledge Light Health District.

For more information regarding the Novel Coronavirus, please click on the following links.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Public-Health-Preparedness/Main-Page/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>

www.llhd.org