



J. Patrick O'Neal, MD, Commissioner | Nathan Deal, Governor

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Flu is currently widespread in Georgia with weeks of activity to come. We need your assistance and cooperation in keeping the student body healthy during this time.

Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever\* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults

*\* It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

Your student may not return to school until they have been fever-free, without the use of fever reducing medications, (<100 F) and symptom free for ONE FULL school day (i.e. if your child goes home sick at 11:00 am on Monday, your child cannot return to school until Wednesday morning). When there is doubt in your mind about sending your student to school, consult your doctor. Your school nurse or principal may ask for a "Release to Return to School" from your doctor

Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days **after** becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

It is not too late to get vaccinated and vaccine is available in many locations (health department, doctor's offices and pharmacies) throughout the county.

You can also take every day preventive steps to stop the spread of germs:

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an [alcohol-based hand rub](#).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.

For more information on flu visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

Sincerely,

Olugbenga Obasanjo, MD, MPH, PhD  
District Health Director