

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As we continue through this respiratory illness season, we would like to share prevention recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help you and your family stay healthy during this winter season.

It is not too late to get vaccinated! Everyone aged 6 months and older is recommended to get vaccinated for flu and COVID-19. The RSV vaccine is recommended for infants 8 months of age or younger born during RSV season (October through March), children 8-19 months of age with some immunocompromising diseases and/or American Indian or Alaska Native children as well as women in their third trimester of pregnancy between 32 and 36 weeks and all adults 60 years and older. There are many places offering seasonal vaccines, including the Harris County Public Health (HCPH) clinics, pharmacies, and health clinics. HCPH offers free vaccines to those who qualify. Please call (832) 927-7575 to schedule an appointment.

Follow these simple steps to help reduce the chances of your child getting a respiratory illness such as flu, COVID-19, RSV, or Pertussis (whooping cough).

- Encourage family members to wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used.
- Clean surfaces frequently such as desks, doorknobs, computer keyboards, faucet handles, phones and any other high touch surfaces.
- Encourage sick family members to cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue or the inside of their elbow. This helps prevent the spread of germs to others.

If your child does get sick, remember to keep them home and notify the school nurse. This helps protect the health of everyone during this respiratory illness season.

- **If you or your child develop symptoms such as fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$), body aches, fatigue or cough, make sure to see your healthcare provider as soon as possible.** Your provider may perform testing or prescribe medication that could help them get better.
- **Make sure to stay home until at least 24 hours after the fever goes away.** If taking medicine such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Motrin (ibuprofen) to control fever, you must wait until the fever is gone for 24 hours *without* using fever reducing medicines before returning to school or work.

Thank you for helping us keep our community safe and well! If you have any questions, please contact the **Office of Epidemiology, Surveillance, and Emerging Diseases at (713) 439-6000 or e-mail us at Epidemiology_Program@phs.hctx.net**. For more information, visit the HCPH website at: www.hcphtx.org.

Sincerely,

Ericka Brown, MD

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Director, Community Health and Wellness

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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