

## **Tips for Preventing Respiratory Illnesses such as Influenza, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), or COVID-19**

*As students enter the Fall and Winter season, layered prevention strategies can serve to limit exposure and transmission of respiratory illnesses such as influenza, RSV, or Covid-19. Please discuss the strategies below with your child so that you can make the best decisions for your family.*

**Stay home when sick:** If your child is not feeling well, please keep them home from school. Contact your child's health care provider for guidance. When reporting your child's absence to the school, please tell us if your child has tested positive for Flu, RSV, or COVID-19.

**Avoid close contact with people who are sick:** Stay away from people who exhibit symptoms of illness such as coughing, and sneezing. Do not share food, drinks, or eating utensils.

**Keep your hands away from your face:** Encourage your child to avoid touching their eyes nose and mouth unless they have first washed their hands.

**Wash hands frequently:** Encourage your child to wash their hands frequently with soap and water, especially before and after eating, using the bathroom, and after blowing your nose or sneezing/coughing. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

**Cover your cough:** Encourage your child to cover coughs and sneezes with their elbow.

**Help your child practice good health habits:** Getting plenty of sleep, exercising regularly, eating a healthy diet, and drinking plenty of fluids are good health habits.

**Vaccination:** Having your child vaccinated against influenza can lessen the chances your child will contract the flu.

COVID-19 vaccines are now available for children 6 months of age and older. COVID-19 booster vaccines are available for children aged 5 years and older.

Please discuss vaccination against the Flu and COVID-19 with your child's healthcare provider.

For more information visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm>

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html#children>

<https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>