Public Health Brief

Richard O. Johnson, M.D., MPH   **Nichole Williamson**
Public Health Officer   HHS Director
Office: 530-694-2146, Ext 249   Office: 530-694-2235
e-mail: rjohnson@alpinecountyca.gov

24/7/365 Emergency Contact Number
Dispatch: 530-694-2231, Ext 330

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URGENT "Tripledemic" Info for Alpine County Parents

You have seen the "Coming Soon" Public Health Brief that was sent out last night. Well, it is definitely here among our students. Diamond Valley Elementary School reported to me this morning that **32% of students are out sick today,** which is well above the level of concern. The following is more information for parents to assist in making wise decisions.

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Flu Symptoms & Complications

Flu Symptoms

Influenza (flu) can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Flu symptoms usually come on suddenly. People who have 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.

More information is available at Flu and COVID-19 symptoms.

Video
This video includes common signs and symptoms of flu.

Flu Complications

People at Higher Risk from Flu

Anyone can get sick with flu, even healthy people, and serious problems related to flu can happen to anyone at any age, but some people are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications if they get sick. This includes people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant people and children younger than 5 years, but especially those younger than 2 years old. Remember, 14 children have died from influenza infections in the USA so far this season.

cold vs flu

Signs and Symptoms	Cold	Influenza (Flu)
Symptom onset	Gradual	Abrupt
Fever	Rare	Common; lasts 3-4 days
Aches	Slight	Common; often severe
Chills	Uncommon	Fairly common
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Usual
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common; can be severe
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Headache	Rare	Common

Emergency Warning Signs of Flu Complications

People experiencing these warning signs should obtain medical care right away.

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish lips or face
- Ribs pulling in with each breath
- Chest pain
- Severe muscle pain (child refuses to walk)
- Dehydration (no urine for 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears when crying)
- Not alert or interacting when awake
- Seizures
- Fever above 104 degrees Fahrenheit that is not controlled by fever-reducing medicine
- In children younger than 12 weeks, any fever
- Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions

In adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Persistent dizziness, confusion, inability to arouse
- Seizures
- Not urinating

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Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120
Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281
District 1: January Riddle, District 2: Ron Hames, District 3: Irvin Jim,
District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith

- Severe muscle pain
- Severe weakness or unsteadiness
- Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions

These lists are not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.

Difference Between Flu and COVID-19

Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2, and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses. You cannot tell the difference between flu and COVID-19 by symptoms alone because some of the symptoms are the same.

Learn more about similarities and differences between COVID-19 and flu.

[Do your part to stop the spread of flu at child care facilities and schools - YouTube](#)

How to Know When It's Safe to Send Your Child Back to School

It may be easy to know when your child is too sick to go to school, but it is often difficult to determine when they are ready to go back. Sending your child back too soon can delay their recovery and make other children in the school more susceptible to the virus as well. Below are some guidelines that may help you decide whether or not your child is ready to return to school.

No Fever

Once the fever has been controlled for over 24 hours without medication, the child is usually safe to return to school. However, your child may still need to stay home if they are continuing to experience other symptoms, such as diarrhea, vomiting, or a persistent cough.

Medication

Your child may return to school after taking medication the doctor prescribed for a minimum of 24 hours, as long as they don't have a fever or other serious symptoms. Make sure that the school nurse and your child's teacher are aware of these medications and their proper doses. Note: <u>DO NOT give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) before school in an attempt to mask a fever or other symptoms!!</u>

Only Mild Symptoms Present

Your child can also go back to school if they're only experiencing a runny nose and other mild symptoms. Make sure to provide tissues for them and to give them an over-the-counter medicine that can help control the remaining symptoms.

Attitude and Appearance Improve

If your child is looking and acting like they are feeling much better, then it is typically safe for them to go back to school.

In the end, you may have to rely on your parental intuition to make the final call. You know your child better than anyone, so you'll be able to tell when they're feeling better. Do they look too miserable to go to school? Are they playing and acting normally, or are they happy to curl up in a chair with a blanket? Trust your intuition to make the best decision. If you have any doubts, always remember you can ask others such as the school nurse or your child's healthcare provider. They will be glad to offer you advice.

The Alpine County Health Department is able to provide testing and/or vaccination for both influenza and COVID-19. Please call us at 530-694-2146 for assistance.

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