

TO All School Superintendents in Interior Health Region

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RE: Supporting Each Other During Respiratory Season

During this busy respiratory illness season, we're receiving reports of high rates of parents going to urgent and primary care centres, physicians' offices and hospital emergency departments with concerns about sick children and worries about accessing fever medication.

Below are resources and reminders to support families. Interior Health (IH) Healthy Schools is requesting that you **share the following information with your elementary school families through school principals** to help provide tools and supports as rates of respiratory illness continue to rise throughout B.C.

When your child is sick

Having a sick child can be distressing for many parents. Here are resources to help:

- [When to bring your child to the Emergency Department](#) (BC Children's Hospital): Additional examples to help families decide if their child needs emergency care.
- 8-1-1 or [HealthLinkBC](#): Families can speak to a registered nurse any time, every day of the year, or a pharmacist from 5 - 9 p.m. PST.
- [Information for parents seeking medical care for children](#) (ChildHealthBC): This resource can help families assess and decide if their child needs medical care. Translations available in [Arabic](#), [Punjabi](#) and [Simplified Chinese](#).
- [Fever or chills, age 11 or younger](#) (HealthLinkBC): Details about taking temperature, causes of fever, treatment, prevention, and a symptom checker. Also [How to take a temperature: Children and Adults](#) (HealthLinkBC) and [Fever and temperature taking](#) (Canadian Paediatrician Society).
- [Children's Medication Shortage](#) (Canadian Pharmacists Association): Guidance for families on when and how to use these products, and when to speak with a health-care professional for advice.
- [Acetaminophen](#) and [Ibuprofen](#) dosing charts (BC Children's Hospital): Two resources to read and use with caution for families who are having trouble finding fever-reducing medication. Before use, consult your community pharmacist or 8-1-1 to avoid accidental overdose. BC Poison Control can be reached 24 hours a day in 150 languages at 1-800-567-8911.
- [Short guide to the wise use of antibiotics](#) (Antibiotic Wise): Information for families about the use of antibiotics.

Preventative measures

Vaccination remains the best defence against both influenza and COVID-19. Book both influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations with your text or email invite [through the GetVaccinated system](#) or call 1-833-838-2323, or call your [local health centre](#). All [clinics offering COVID-19 appointments](#) will accept walk-ins for families with children for their influenza vaccine.

Beyond vaccinations, there are basic things we can all do to help prevent the spread of respiratory illness. Key preventative measures include:

- Keep your child at home if unwell (see [Too Sick for School?](#)).
- Remind your child to practice respiratory etiquette: consider wearing a mask in crowded public spaces, and cough and sneeze into the elbow.
- Clean hands regularly.
- Remind your child to avoid touching their face, especially their eyes, mouth and nose.
- For more information, visit [BC Centre for Disease Control](#).
- Asymptomatic testing is not recommended for respiratory infections.

Thank you for helping keep our schools and communities healthy.