November 22, 2018

Dear Parents:

Influenza season is upon us once again. As in the past few years, we are asking for the assistance of you and your child’s school in tracking the incidence of this disease.

Influenza is a highly contagious virus that attacks the breathing system of humans. It spreads very quickly through coughing and sneezing and symptoms include headache, fever, sore throat, cough and sometimes nausea. It is very easy to confuse the symptoms of cold and ‘flu, or ignore the symptoms of ‘flu until many others are also infected. The ‘flu can be fatal to people with pre-existing health problems, the elderly and the very young.

Prevention (i.e.: vaccinations and good personal hygiene) is the best way to deal with the spread of influenza.

**Your child’s school** has been chosen as a site to monitor influenza-like illness as part of this provincial tracking. This will help our health region respond to the first signs of an influenza outbreak. We will be assessing the absentee numbers in your child’s school that are due to true cases of influenza or influenza-like illness. Early awareness of increasing cases of ‘flu in our community is our best warning system, and will alert us to put other outbreak response measures into play. Your help is crucial to give us a true sense of illness in our communities. We are asking that in the event of your child’s absence from school due to ‘flu-like symptoms, you advise the school of these symptoms. The school will in turn relay this information to the local Public Health office.

We thank you in advance for your help in keeping our communities healthy!

Wanda Anton, RN BN

Public Health Nurse

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