

December 8, 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

York Region Public Health is seeing more student absences due to illness. The flu, stomach flu (norovirus) and the common cold are spreading fast. Here are some tips to stay healthy!

Stay Home When Sick

- Vomiting or diarrhea? Stay home for at least 48 hours after symptoms stop
- Cough or runny nose? Stay home until:
 - ✓ At least 24 hours have passed
 - ✓ Symptoms are getting better; and
 - ✓ You have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine

Norovirus (Stomach Flu)

- Symptoms: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps
 - Kids usually vomit more than adults
- How to stop the spread:
 - ✓ Stay home for at least 48 hours after symptoms stop
 - ✓ Wash hands often with soap and warm water
 - ✓ Clean and disinfect surfaces and items regularly:
 - Wear gloves
 - Use soap and water to clean first
 - Disinfect with a bleach solution (1 cup bleach + 9 cups water)
 - ✓ Wash contaminated clothes and linens
 - ✓ Avoid handling or preparing food for at least 48 hours after symptoms stop

Influenza (Flu) & Common Cold

- Flu symptoms: sudden headache, fever, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, runny nose, chills, sore throat, cough
 - Cold symptoms are similar but usually milder
- Most recover in 7–10 days, but some groups such as older adults, pregnant women and people with chronic conditions are at higher risk

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What Else Can I Do to Help Stop the Spread of Illnesses at School?

- Get your free flu shot! It's available for everyone 6 months and older at participating pharmacies, doctor/nurse practitioner offices and walk-in clinics
- Stay home if you're sick, following the recommendations in this letter
- Wash your hands often. Use sanitizer (70% alcohol) if soap and water aren't available
- Cover your coughs/sneezes with tissue or elbow
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Clean and disinfect surfaces often
- Eat healthy and stay active

Need Help?

Call York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

More information is on our website at york.ca/VirusSeason

Together, we can keep our kids learning and our schools safe!