

February 28, 2020

Dear Lake County School administration and staff, student, and parent/guardian,

With the increase in illnesses from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in other countries, I want to assure you that Lake County Health Department's priority is to protect the health of all who live, work, play, and visit Lake County. Currently, the immediate risk to the public remains **low** in Illinois.

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If you or your child develops symptoms after travel or after exposure to someone known to be infected with COVID-19, please stay home and call your doctor for evaluation. School nurses should remain vigilant and inform the health department of these students and school staff in order to receive further guidance.

We do not recommend the use of masks and gloves for prevention by the public. Instead, we strongly recommend the use of nonpharmaceutical interventions or "everyday preventative actions" to slow the spread of virus in the community. Everyday preventative actions include:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without fever reducing medications (Tylenol, ibuprofen, and aspirin).
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.

Please be advised, there has been an increase in influenza (flu) activity across the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that since October 2019, up to 41 million people have experienced flu illness and 16,000 to 29,000 people have died due to flu in the United States. If you haven't done so, **please get the flu vaccine**. The everyday preventative actions above also help stop the spread of the flu.

For additional information, including how households, schools, and the community should prepare for spread of COVID-19 please visit: www.lakecountyiil.gov/coronavirus.

Sincerely,

Sana Shireen Ahmed, MD, Medical Epidemiologist, Communicable Disease Program