

Jackson County Health Department

801 W. 2nd Street, Seymour, IN 47274 812 522-6474 (ofc) 812 522-2916 (fax)

www.jacksoncountyhealth-in.com

January 18, 2013

Parents of Jackson County School Children:

Many of the schools in Jackson County have noted an increase in the number of absences recently. There are a variety of “viral” illnesses being reported in the community right now, most of which are typical for this time of year.

There is some confusion regarding the term “flu”. The respiratory viral flu and gastro-intestinal virus, often called the stomach flu, share many of the same symptoms but are caused by different viruses.

Both include the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Body Aches
- Headache
- Chills & Fatigue
- Rhinitis (runny nose)

The gastro-intestinal virus or “stomach flu” is not due to the same influenza virus and can also cause fever, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness and may lead to dehydration.

The containment of any and all viruses depends on precautions that can include:

- Cover - coughs and sneezes into sleeves or tissues, not into the hand
- Confine – if ill, stay home and away from others
- Clean – common surfaces touched by individuals such as door knobs, countertops, faucets, phones and computer keyboards) need to be cleaned with a bleach wipe. Hands need to be washed often with warm water and a good soap. Hand sanitizers need to be used when soap and water is not available.

These illnesses may be mild, moderate or severe and can cause complications with brain, lung and/or heart infections. Elderly persons and those with impaired immune systems are at higher risk. Over-the-counter medications may assist with relieving the symptoms. Not all respiratory illnesses are the flu, but because of the current epidemic, individuals may need to contact their personal family health-care provider for more information or to seek prescribed medications.

Regular immunization and good personal hygiene, along with following the recommendation above, should assist you and your family in avoiding or weathering the normal Indiana “flu season”.

Additional information may be found at: <http://www.in.gov/flu/>