

Dear Parents and Guardians,

With the beginning of the respiratory illness season, please take a few minutes to remind your children about some of the simple things they can do to stop the spread of germs that make themselves or others sick.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of this illness is through frequent hand washing and proper technique. Proper hand washing technique, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), includes:

- Use soap and running water.
- Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them for 20 seconds.
- Wash all surfaces (backs of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails).
- Rinse well and leave the water running until after drying your hands.
- Dry hands with a single use towel.
- Turn off faucet using a paper towel.

It is important to wash your hands frequently, including:

- Before and after eating.
- After using the bathroom.
- After contact with body fluids or changing diapers.
- After handling raw meat, poultry or fish.
- After touching animals.
- After blowing your nose.
- After coughing or sneezing.
- Before and after treating wounds or cuts.
- Before or after treating a sick or injured person.
- Before you touch your eyes, mouth or nose.
- After being in a crowded public space.
- After handling garbage.

If you, or your child, have symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g. coughing, body aches, fever), the Minnesota Department of Health recommends:

- Staying home from work or school to reduce the risk of exposing others.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue whenever you cough or sneeze. Put the used tissue in the waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.

For more information on the Minnesota Department of Health's Cover Your Cough Campaign, visit: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/infectioncontrol/cover/>

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Minnesota Department of Health at 612-676-5414 or 1-877-676-5414.