

## Thoughts on Entero-virus

Sometimes because of our busy work lives and professional demands, working parents send kids to school with a common cold because they'll weather it OK. Right now, though, a consideration is that, although a child may not have asthma, others in the class do, so we need to be more cautious about exposing them to others. So parents need to keep kids home when they're sick!

And this applies to school staff as well. When we take our "germs" to work, our co-workers take them home to their kids, and we expose the kids in our building. Although a staff member may feel able to push through the day and survive, spreading illness is not a good idea!

Parents and teachers can help kids practice coughing into their elbows rather than using their hand over their mouth or not covering their mouths at all. If they practice it every morning for 10 seconds in class, kids will start helping each other remember, too. Make it fun. Just a quick, "Show me how we cough?" and everybody responds by crooking an elbow in front of their mouths as the teacher demonstrates, and then "again!" a couple of times. Doing that can pay great dividends in the long run. We can know in our heads what we're supposed to do, but it has to become an automatic gesture, which only happens with physical practice.

Washing hands often, especially before meals!!! MAKE THE TIME! In classrooms and at home... Remind them to use soap and to continue to lather their hands while they sing all of the "Happy Birthday" song.

**For schools:** If this continues to grow in number, consider having one person in each building that is the contact person for entero-virus. One person needs to have all of the information including:

- What the newest recommendations are for schools
- Geographic areas of new cases
- Concerns that have been voiced by your building's parents
- What your district is doing
- How your district/building are handling communications about this.

**For parents:**

- Ask your school how you'll get updates on what they want you to know
- Practice the cough-in-the-elbow movement. A cough in the hand leaves a trail of virus on everything you or your child touches!!

Although communications issues may not be critical in your area now, create your system ahead of time. Parents, be sure you're plugged in to the process. If this doesn't rise to being a critical issue for your region at this point, the communications system may end up being very helpful with some other more local health crisis in the future.

