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New Isolation Regulation for Influenza Cases

The Miami County Health Department thanks and appreciates the cooperation of school district staff, as well as the parents and guardians of students within our county, by reading and following this new regulation. The Miami County Health Department is implementing this regulation due to a recommendation from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, based on nationally recognized guidance and subsequent implementation.

Individual cases of influenza are not reportable in the state of Kansas; however, this new regulation would recommend influenza cases in a school setting (within Miami County, Kansas), to be isolated at home for seven days following the onset of symptoms NOT the date of diagnosis. The reason for this change in regulation is that persons with influenza can be infectious for up to seven days following onset of symptoms and often have a fever lasting at least five days. For isolation purposes, a diagnosis of an influenza case, any strain (most commonly A or B) would require parent notification to the school nurse and verification from a medical provider. The school nurse is responsible for the isolation recommendation and follow-up.

When started promptly, antiviral drugs can lessen symptoms and shorten the duration of symptoms by approximately one day. Also, vaccinated persons may present with a milder illness when compared to unvaccinated persons; as such, those who receive a prescription for an antiviral and/or those who have received the influenza vaccine, are not exempt from the new isolation regulation.

Additional ways you can help:

- Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children not to share personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. When a tissue is unavailable, advise your children to cover up their coughs or sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand.
- Know the signs and symptoms of influenza. Symptoms include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache and feeling very tired. Some people may experience vomiting or diarrhea.
- Do not send children to school or into public, if they are sick. Any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be evaluated and sent home, if deemed necessary by school health officials.