

# KIDS HEALTH

October 2024 Newsletter

# Zone

**Respiratory (e.g., influenza, COVID-19, streptococcal pharyngitis) infections are frequent cause of illness among children and adults. CDC estimates that from 2010-2020, flu-related hospitalizations among children younger than 5 years ranged from between 6,000 to 27,000 per year in the United States. However, everyday actions help keep students healthy by minimizing the spread of infections in school settings.**

### Common respiratory viral illnesses

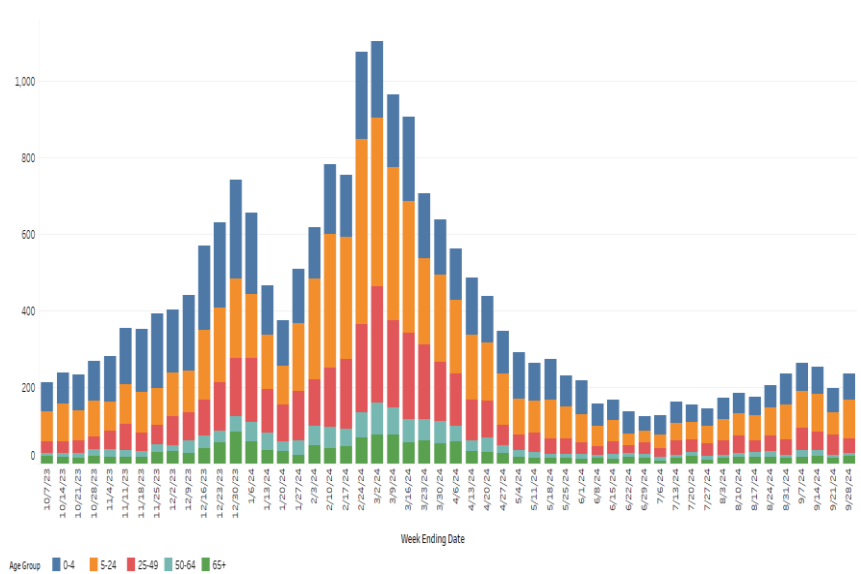
- Flu
- COVID-19
- RSV
- Adenovirus
- Rhinovirus/Enterovirus (common cold)
- Parainfluenza
- Parvovirus B19 (Fifth Disease)

### Examples of respiratory virus symptoms

- Fever
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Decrease in appetite
- Sore throat
- Vomiting
- New loss of taste or smell
- Headache, muscle or body aches
- Diarrhea
- Weakness



### Influenza-like illness (ILI) Emergency Department Visits, by Age Group - Nebraska, 2023-2024



Developing, regularly updating, and implementing a school health plan, including measures to prevent and control respiratory and gastrointestinal infections, can help schools limit the spread of disease and reduce student and staff absences from school due to infectious diseases. Prior to COVID19, illness-related school closures rarely occurred, representing approximately 1% of all unplanned closures over a 2-year, non-pandemic period. Of these closures, the majority were due to respiratory (59%) illness.

### Schools have a critical role in preventing infectious utilizing a layered/multicomponent approach.

- Hand hygiene
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Immunizations
- Ventilation
- Wearing masks
- Physical distancing
- Staying home when sick



DHHS updates their respiratory disease data report weekly during respiratory surveillance season, including data on influenza, RSV, SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), and other respiratory pathogens to show current activity levels and trends across Nebraska.

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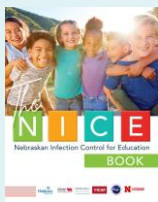
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## QUICK LINKS

[Preventing Spread of Infections in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)

[Guidance for Infection Prevention and Control in K-12 School \(cdc.gov\)](#)  
[Prevention and Control of Respiratory and Gastrointestinal Infections in Kindergarten through Grade 12 \(K-12\) Schools \(cdc.gov\)](#)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/orr/sc-hool-preparedness/infection-prevention/actions.html>  
[https://www.cdc.gov/orr/sc-hool-preparedness/infection-prevention/docs/K12-Infection-Prevention-Parent-Fact-Sheet\\_508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/orr/sc-hool-preparedness/infection-prevention/docs/K12-Infection-Prevention-Parent-Fact-Sheet_508.pdf)

[Nebraskan Infection Control for Education Book - ICAP \(nebraskamed.com\)](#)



The NICE book offers resources and tools to assist schools in managing each layer of protection, along with guidance on effective communication.

This year, use a layered approach to prevent and control respiratory outbreaks:

- **Promote hand hygiene:**
  - Reinforcing handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are not readily available.
- **Respiratory etiquette:**
  - Encouraging covering of the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- **Cleaning and disinfection:**
  - Regular cleaning of surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys.
- **Vaccinations:**
  - Staying up to date on recommended vaccinations is essential to prevent illness and to prevent severe illness from some infections.
- **Ventilation:**
  - Reduces the likelihood of spreading disease, particularly respiratory viruses. Improving air quality can reduce the number of germs in the air by increasing airflow, cleaning the air, or moving gatherings outdoors.
- **Wearing a mask:**
  - Effective component of infectious disease prevention strategies.
- **Physical (Social) distancing:**
  - Can help lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.
- **Staying home when sick:**
  - Lowers the risk of spreading infections. Schools must balance the risk of infectious disease spread with educational, social, and mental health needs of children when determining when students should stay home.

## Respiratory Virus Guidance Snapshot

**Core Prevention Strategies**

- Immunizations
- Hygiene
- Steps for Cleaner Air
- Treatment
- Stay Home and Prevent Spread\*

**Additional Prevention Strategies**

- Masks
- Distancing
- Tests

Layering prevention strategies can be especially helpful when:

- ✓ Respiratory viruses are causing a lot of illness in your community
- ✓ You or those around you have risk factors for severe illness
- ✓ You or those around you were recently exposed, are sick, or are recovering

\*Stay home and away from others until,

- Your symptoms are getting better
- and
- You are fever-free (without meds)

for 24 hrs

Then take added precaution for the next 5 days