School season can mean prime time for catching a cold or the flu. Here are some facts on preventing common infections, and how to treat them if necessary.

**Symptoms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Flu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102° F in infants and small children</td>
<td>Usually 102° F, but can go up to 104°F and usually lasts 3 to 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Sudden onset and can be severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle Aches</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Usual, and often severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiredness and Weakness</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Often extreme, and can last two or more weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Exhaustion</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Sudden onset and can be severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runny Nose</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneezing</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore Throat</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cough</td>
<td>Mild hacking cough</td>
<td>Usual, and can become severe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PREVENTION/ MANAGEMENT:**

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or with alcohol hand sanitizers whenever you have the cold or the flu.
- Get a flu shot.
- If you have the flu, stay at home until you have no temperature (see the doctor if needed).
- For both cold and flu, try to cover your coughs and keep a distance between you and other people.
- For both the cold and flu, get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids.

**FACT**

- Bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose (present in 25 to 30 percent of the healthy population but not causing an infection).
- Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States.
- MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or by using items or surfaces that have been used by someone else with the infection (towels, used bandages, athletic equipment).
- In most cases, it is not necessary to close schools because of a student’s MRSA infection. It is important to note that spreading MRSA can be prevented by simple measures such as washing your hands and keeping infected wounds clean and bandaged until healed.

**SYMPTOMS (MINOR TO SERIOUS)**

- Skin redness and swelling
- “Pimple-like” red bumps
- Boils
- Rash
- Fever
- Headache
- A general sick or tired feeling

**PREVENTION**

- To prevent MRSA infection:
  - Practice good hand/body hygiene: Keep your hands clean by washing them with soap and water when they are visibly soiled, or by using alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Also, shower immediately after participating in exercise.
  - Avoid sharing personal items (towels, razors, shirts) that come in contact with your bare skin. Use a barrier, such as clothing or a towel, between your skin and shared equipment (such as weight training benches).
  - Cover skin cuts or scrapes with a clean bandage until they heal.
  - Maintain clean equipment and clothing by frequently washing your sports/exercise clothes, and wiping equipment and surfaces that come into direct contact with other people.
  - Factors that help MRSA transmission are referred to as the 5 Cs: Crowding, frequent skin-to-skin Contact, Compromised skin (cuts or scrapes), Contaminated items or surfaces, and lack of Cleanliness.

**TREATMENT**

- Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated effectively by drainage of pus with or without antibiotics by a health care professional. However, staph bacteria also can cause serious infections (such as surgical wound infections, bloodstream infections and pneumonia).

### Facts/Tips for Parents & Teachers

#### Pedestrian
- Nearly one-fifth (18 percent) of all children between the ages of 5 and 9 who were killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians.
- Children are at increased risk for pedestrian injury because:
  1. they are smaller in size and difficult to see
  2. they often misjudge whether it is safe to cross the street

#### School Buses
- School buses are one of the safest means of travel.
- On school buses, most injuries occur when entering or leaving the bus.

#### Motor Vehicles
- Car crashes are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the U.S.
- Nearly half of all children killed in car crashes are not wearing safety belts, and those who survive suffer from more severe injuries.
- One in 10 teens report driving after drinking alcohol.
- Have a written parent/teen agreement stating all the rules for driving and consequences for breaking the rules (limit passengers, set curfews, require safety belt use, etc.).
- Children 12 years of age and younger should always ride in the back seat wearing a safety belt.

#### Internet/Social Media
- Popular Internet sites such as Facebook and MySpace make it easier for teens to post and share personal information, pictures and videos, allowing online criminals to target them.
- Computers should only be used in an open area of the home; use should be monitored, especially at night.

### Tips for Students

#### Before & After School
- Do not cross the street alone if you’re younger than age 10. Use crosswalks when available.
- Always try to walk on paths or sidewalks. If there are no sidewalks or paths, walk facing traffic.
- Look both ways for danger before and while crossing the street.
- Learn and obey all school bus safety rules.
- Wait for buses away from the street in safe areas such as a bus shelter or sidewalk.
- Wait for the bus driver to signal you that it is alright to cross the road.
- Make arrangements for a safe ride home before going out with friends where drinking alcohol may occur.
- Don’t give out your name, address, phone number or other personal information to strangers on the Internet.
- If you notice odd or inappropriate behavior, notify a parent or guardian.

#### At School
- Get involved with positive activities that keep you away from violence.
- Talk to an adult you can trust about situations that make you feel bad.
- Never get into the middle of a violent situation - get help from an adult.
- Take threats seriously. Tell a trusted adult when you’ve learned of a threat to anyone at school.

Sources: www.cdc.gov & www.nhtsa.gov

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**At School**

**Violence**
- Violence is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 10 to 24.
- Youth violence starts early and continues into later years. Bullying is a form of violence that often occurs at school and is not always noticed.
- Among the students who committed a school-associated homicide, 20 percent were known to have been victims of bullying and 12 percent were known to have expressed suicidal thoughts or engage in suicidal behavior.