



St. Joseph School, Sliema

HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT

Dear Parents and Students,

My colleagues have encouraged me to prepare some guidelines about prevention of infectious conditions which are commonly spread in schools or wherever there is a community of people close together.



You can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases by keeping your contagious child home from school until she can no longer spread her illness to others. Children should be kept home when they have:

- Diarrhoea or stools that contain blood or mucus;
- An illness that caused vomiting 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is known to be caused by a condition that's not contagious;
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless caused by a noncontagious condition;
- Impetigo (a skin infection with erupting sores) until 24 hours after treatment has been started;
- Head lice (until after proper treatment has been given);
- Scabies (an itchy skin condition caused by mites) until after treatment has been given;
- Conditions that suggest the possible presence of a more serious illness, including a fever, sluggishness, persistent crying, irritability, or difficulty breathing.

Colds, Coughs and Flu:



Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes a person can become infected by touching something — such as a surface or object — with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. The best ways to prevent seasonal flu is to get a seasonal flu vaccination each year and follow proper respiratory and hand hygiene etiquette.

Children, parents, and staff should be encouraged to take the following everyday preventive measures:

Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after use and wash your hands. If a tissue is not available, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve, not your hand.



Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.

Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.

Remember that Flu and Colds are caused by viruses not bacteria and they **DO NOT RESPOND TO ANTIBIOTICS.**



Do not give children antibiotics unless prescribed by a doctor and make sure that if the doctor does prescribe them, the whole course is taken. Treatment must not be stopped if the child feels better.

Threadworms



Threadworm is the most common worm infection that can be found in both adults and children.

Symptoms

Threadworm begins with an itchy feeling around your anus (back passage), usually at night under warm sheets.

Without treatment, threadworm may give rise to vaginitis (inflammation of the vagina) in girls and women.

You can often see threadworms, a 1cm thread-like worm, in your child's stools or their bottom.

Treatment

Infected children or adults should be treated as soon as possible. The rest of the family should also be treated at the same time.

Your pharmacist can give you appropriate advice. It usually involves just taking a single dose of pills.

Children under two years of age will need to be seen by a doctor. One treatment is usually enough.

Children can still go to school or childcare, in spite of having threadworms.

What can be done to control threadworms?

If you have threadworms, it's important to shower in the morning in order to remove eggs and bacteria from the anal area.



Wash your hands thoroughly after each visit to the bathroom and before each meal.

Underwear should be changed daily.

Bed sheets should be changed frequently, especially 7 to 10 days after the treatment.

Infected children and adults should keep their nails short.

Infected children should ideally wear cotton gloves when sleeping.

Clean your home thoroughly, especially the bedrooms, and remove as much dust as possible.

Do not eat food in your bedroom.

If several family members are infected, you should all be treated on the same day.

Avoid food and drinks containing a lot of sugar, and eat high-fibre food to prevent constipation.

Head Lice

Head lice infection is very common. It has been estimated that up to one in every 10 children in school acquires head lice at some time. Anyone who comes in close contact with someone who already has head lice, or even their contaminated clothing and other belongings, is at risk for acquiring head lice. So it is easy to transmit head lice from one person to another. The adult louse is a good jumper and easily jumps from one head to another. The whitish nits that stick to the hairs are eggs. It is difficult to remove them even when they are dead and a special fine comb must be used.



- Head lice are parasites that are found on human heads.
- Head lice are spread by personal contact or the sharing of combs, brushes, caps, and other clothing.
- Head lice are a common problem with schoolchildren.
- Head lice cause a tickling feeling of something moving in the hair, itching, and sores on the head.
- The affected individual, family members also infected, and the home all should be treated.
- Treatment is easily available from a pharmacy. Speak to the pharmacist about it.
- Very young children should be seen by a doctor before beginning medication.

Hoping you will find this information useful,

Regards,

Ms Josette Camilleri
Health & Safety Teacher

References:

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000080.htm, <http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/diseases/facts/pinworm.htm#ixzz2jxblyP5x>
http://www.medicinenet.com/head_lice/article.htm#head_lice_facts, www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/infectious/