

## Communicable Diseases

When an outbreak of a communicable disease (such as pertussis, hepatitis A, etc.) occurs among staff or students in the school district, the school nurse consults with the Okanogan County Public Health to identify the exact extent of the illness, inform parents of the potential for illness, and assist in the prevention of further spread of the illness. Okanogan County Public Health takes the lead in any situation which might impact the health of the community.

The most important thing you can do to help keep our school safe from communicable disease is to keep your student home when sick. The following are some guidelines:

- **Fever**—this means a temperature at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Vomiting**—more than just a little something in the throat from too much bouncing around.
- **Diarrhea**—watery or loose stools.
- **Coughing** or having any sort of breathing trouble. Coughing spreads infection.
- **Rash** that is spreading. Check with your doctor to determine whether the rash is contagious before sending your child to school.
- **Lethargic**—beyond just acting tired. A child who is truly difficult to wake, or whose behavior suddenly makes a dramatic shift, needs to see a doctor.

[Okanogan County Public Health](http://www.okanogancounty.org/ochd/) <http://www.okanogancounty.org/ochd/>

[Infectious Disease Control Guide for School Staff.](http://www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/pubdocs/InfectiousDiseaseControlGuide3-11-04.pdf)

<http://www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/pubdocs/InfectiousDiseaseControlGuide3-11-04.pdf>

[Preparing Schools for H1N1 Flu](http://www.k12.wa.us/healthservices/H1N1Flu.aspx) <http://www.k12.wa.us/healthservices/H1N1Flu.aspx>

[Center for Disease Control: H1N1 Flu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_001)

[http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/?s\\_cid=swineFlu\\_outbreak\\_001](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_001)

### HIV and STD prevention education

In 1988 the Washington State Legislature mandated that a program of prevention education be presented to students annually in grades 5 to 12. The *KNOW HIV/STD Prevention Curriculum* has been reviewed and approved for medical accuracy by the Washington State Department of Health, Office on HIV/AIDS, as required by Washington State law. Our school board has also approved the *KNOW curriculum* which you are invited to preview. If you would like to preview the curricula you may contact the school office to arrange a time or it will be on display during fall conferences. If after reviewing the curriculum you would like to excuse your student from attendance, you may sign an exemption form in the school office.

### Head Lice

One of the most frustrating communicable conditions commonly found in schools is head lice. It is important to remember that although head lice is a nuisance and requires a lot of work on parent's part to treat, they are not known to transmit infectious diseases.

[Click here for head lice information.](http://www.spokaneschools.org/StudentSupport/HealthServices/Lice.stm)

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### Reporting of Communicable Diseases

Schools are asked to report the occurrence of specific communicable diseases to Okanogan County Public Health. The incidence of these diseases is tallied and the numbers forwarded to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. The CDC receives these same types of numbers from every state, and with them is able to identify disease trends in the United States.

In order to identify the specific diseases which require reporting, school staff communicate with parents to request the reason for a student's absence.