

Information for parents to help prevent the spread of illness in your child's school

The school your child attends is currently experiencing an increase in absenteeism. The school is working with York Region Public Health to stop the spread of illness from person to person, but there is much that you can do at home.

You play a big role in ensuring that the germ(s) that are causing the illness in your child's school are not passed onto family members and potentially other students that attend the school.

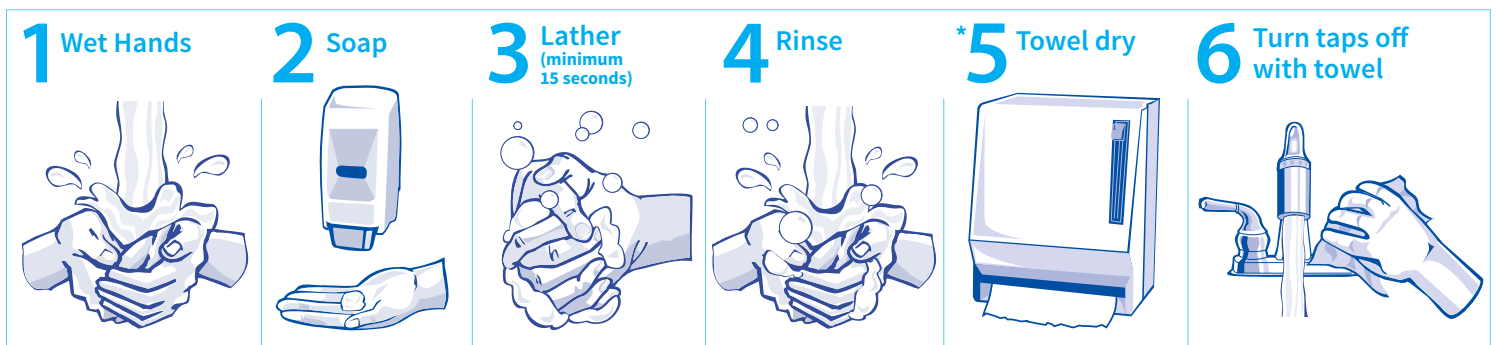
Following some important infection prevention and control practices, such as proper hand hygiene and proper cleaning and disinfecting at home will help to protect your family and prevent further spread at school.

Proper Handwashing is the most effective way to prevent the spread of illness.

Hands should be washed:

- **before** serving food or eating
- **after** coming home from public places such as school or the walk-in clinic
- **after** interacting with anyone who is ill
- **after** using the washroom
- **after** coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose
- **after** cleaning up body fluids such as vomit and feces

Wash hands frequently for at least 15 seconds using the six-step method.



*It is recommended to use paper towels if a family member is sick with vomiting and/or diarrhea. If a cloth towel is used to dry hands, ensure it is changed regularly (e.g., three to four times a day) to prevent spread of illness.

Proper use of Hand Sanitizer

- If your family uses hand sanitizer when handwashing facilities are not available, it is recommended that it contains 60 to 90 per cent of alcohol.
- Hand sanitizer is not effective on hands that are visibly soiled.
- When using hand sanitizer, apply enough to wet entire hands and rub solution until completely dry.
- Carefully follow the manufacturer's directions for proper use and storage of product.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

In addition to practicing good hand hygiene, it is important to properly clean and disinfect surfaces to prevent the spread of illness in your home.

Cleaning comes first

- Cleaning is the physical removal of visible dirt and organic matter.
- There are three steps to the cleaning process: **wash, rinse, and dry**.
- **Wash** with soap, water and friction, **Rinse** with water, and **Dry** by air or with a clean towel.
- All three steps must be done properly, prior to disinfecting.

Disinfecting is the second step

- Disinfecting is a process that destroys most micro-organisms that can cause diseases.
- Disinfectants are chemicals used for the process of disinfecting. To work properly, disinfectants must be applied to a clean surface, at the proper strength/concentration for the required contact time.
- Always follow the manufacturer's directions. These will provide information on proper mixing directions and required contact time.
- Look for "disinfect", "disinfection" or "kills viruses and bacteria" claims on the product label.

Ensure surfaces that are frequently touched, such as door handles, light switches and faucets, along with toilet seats and washrooms are routinely cleaned and disinfected.

Take precautions to protect yourself when Cleaning Up Vomit and Diarrhea

- To reduce the risk of spreading illness, it is important to use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as rubber/disposable gloves, an apron and a mask when cleaning up vomit and diarrhea.
- Consider purchasing PPE if you do not already have it at home.
- Soak up the vomit/diarrhea with paper towels and discard the contents into a garbage bag.
- Clean area with soap and water. Rinse the soap off and then dry the area.
- Disinfect the area with a disinfectant for the recommended contact time.
- Wipe up excess disinfectant after the contact time has been achieved and discard paper towel.
- Discard any used, disposable PPE into the garbage.
- Wash hands properly with soap and water.
- If the PPE is reusable equipment such as rubber gloves and cloth aprons, ensure they are properly cleaned and disinfected or properly laundered after use.
- Always wash hands after the clean-up.

It is important to teach your child about infection prevention and control practices, such as proper hand hygiene and the appropriate way to sneeze and cough into sleeve or a tissue, so they can help to stop the spread of illness.

If your child is ill, please keep them at home.

For more information on infection prevention and control, visit york.ca/infectionprevention



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York Region Health Connection

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