



**MIDDLESEX COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
**Division of Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness**

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# Preventing Illness in the School Setting

The Middlesex County Public Health Department and local Boards of Education are working together to help prevent the spread of illness within the school setting. School facilities participate in active surveillance of illness and report activity to the local health authority.

Below are some healthy habits parents, teachers, and students can follow to help prevent the spread of illness within schools and the community:

- **Handwashing** - You should wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used.

You should wash your hands:

- Before you eat
  - Before, during and after preparing food
  - After going to the bathroom
  - After changing diapers or cleaning a child who has gone to the bathroom
  - Before and after tending to someone who is sick
  - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - After handling an animal, their toys, leashes, or waste
  - After handling garbage
  - After playing sports
  - Before and after treating a cut or wound
  - Any time they become dirty
- **Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing** - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. After using the tissue throw it away in a waste basket, and then wash your hands. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.
  - **Stay home if you feel sick** - Students, faculty, or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should keep away from others as much as possible, stay home, and not attend school, or go into the community (except to seek medical care or for other necessities) for at least 24 hours after fever is gone. Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
  - **Report illness to your school** - Parents should notify their school if their child is out sick with an illness.

