As first term of school progresses, our primary thoughts are of staying healthy throughout autumn and winter. In this newsletter you will find information on healthy eating and common infectious diseases to which your child can be exposed and how to minimise infection.

Starting the day with a healthy breakfast is a good habit to establish:

If you want your child to think more clearly give them a breakfast high in protein such as eggs and milk. Fresh fruit and vegetables help children and adults think and feel better. Exercise is good for thinking because it provides oxygen to the brain. Avoid white "squishy" things like chips, white bread and cakes. A diet high in carbohydrates is good for sustaining energy throughout the day. Having a higher protein/lower carbohydrate breakfast enhances concentration and memory. Eggs in particular "literally lay down learning" because of the nutrient choline found in the egg which helps to improve thinking and memory.

Keep feeding the working brain throughout the day:

- Get your child to help pack their lunch box so they are more likely to eat what is in it.
- Try to include protein in your child's lunch box to keep them full and energetic.
- Exercise is vital in helping manage weight, keeping muscles strong, helping hearts and lungs develop and improving their hand eye coordination.
- The healthiest drink options for children are water and milk.
- Look after your child's emotional health too, try not to overschedule them. Having some down time is important.

*WALK TO SCHOOL DAY 24 May 2013*
Go4Fun is a free healthy living program for kids to become fitter, healthier and happier. The program is fun and interactive and supports 7-13 year old children and their families to adopt a healthy lifestyle and a long lasting and healthy approach to living. Children and their families can meet new friends, have fun and learn new skills while getting fit, playing fun games, feeling more confident and boosting self-esteem. The program has been specifically designed for children who are above a healthy weight. Programs are currently available in Hornsby, Epping, Chatswood and Baulkham Hills. To register ring 1800 780 900 or register online at www.mendcentral.org.

Keep healthy by remembering to wash hands between activities:

Hand washing is the best way to prevent germs from spreading & to keep your children from getting sick. When children come into contact with germs, they can unknowingly become infected simply by touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Once they’re infected, it’s usually just a matter of time before the whole family comes down with the same illness.

Good hand washing is the first line of defence against the spread of many illnesses, from the common cold to more serious illnesses such as influenza, meningitis, bronchiolitis & most types of infective diarrhoea.

Demonstrate hand washing to your children, or wash your hands together often so they learn this important habit.

- Wash your hands in warm or cold water
- Use soap & lather up for about 20 seconds. Make sure you get in between the fingers & under the nails where uninvited germs like to hang out. Don’t forget the wrists!
- Rinse & dry your hands well with a clean towel or air dryer. Not drying hands increases the risk of infection.
- Wash hands before eating & cooking, after using the bathroom, after cleaning around the house, after touching animals & pets, before & after visiting sick people, after blowing your nose, sneezing, coughing & after being outside.

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*St Ives: 9988 4999 *Galston / Pennant Hills: 9483 7955
Identified below are three common infectious illnesses that your child can be exposed to during winter. The table contains information about each disease and its spread and prevention.

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# Measles

**What is it**  
Measles is a viral disease that may have serious complications.  
In the past, measles infection was very common in childhood. Measles is now rare in NSW because of immunisation but many areas of the world continue to experience outbreaks. In 2008 there were 164,000 deaths worldwide due to measles.

**What are the symptoms**  
The first symptoms are fever, tiredness, cough, runny nose, sore red eyes and feeling unwell. A few days later a rash appears. The rash starts on the face, spreads down to the body and last for 4-7 days. The rash is not itchy.  
Up to a third of people with measles have complications. These include ear infections, diarrhoea and pneumonia, and may require hospitalisation. About one in every 1000 people with measles develops encephalitis (swelling of the brain).

**How is it spread**  
Measles is usually spread when a person breathes in the measles virus that has been coughed or sneezed into the air by an infectious person. Measles is one of the most easily spread of all human infections. Just being in the same room as someone with measles can result in infection. People with measles are usually infectious from just before the symptoms begin until four days after the rash appears. The time from exposure to becoming sick is usually about 10 days. The rash usually appears around 14 days after exposure.

**Who is at risk**  
Measles was common before 1966, so most people born before then are immune.  
People at risk of measles were born during or after 1966 and have never had measles or two doses of Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

**Prevention**  
The best protection against measles is immunisation with two doses of MMR vaccine. This vaccine provides protection against infection with measles, as well as against mumps and rubella.  
MMR vaccine should be given to children at age 12 months and a second dose is given at 4 years of age.  
Anyone born during or after 1966 and who has never had measles infection or MMR vaccination should make sure that they have had two doses of MMR vaccine at least four weeks apart.  
It is safe to have the vaccine more than twice, so people who are unsure should be vaccinated. People with measles should stay at home until they are no longer infectious (i.e. until 4 days after the rash starts).  
For people who are not immune and have come into contact with a person with measles, infection can sometimes still be prevented with MMR vaccine if given within 3 days of exposure or with immunoglobulin within 7 days of exposure.

**How is it diagnosed**  
Measles is suspected when a person feels unwell, has a cough, runny nose or sore eyes and a fever followed by a rash.  
Whenever measles is suspected, a blood test and samples from the nose, throat and urine should be collected to confirm the diagnosis. Confirmation of the diagnosis is important as it allows prompt public health follow-up of other people who are at risk of measles.

**How is it treated**  
People with measles infection are normally advised to rest, drink plenty of fluids, and take paracetamol to treat the fever. There is no specific treatment.  
While a person is infectious with measles it is important that he or she remains at home to reduce the possibility of spreading it to other people.

**Public Health response**  
Doctors, hospitals and laboratories, schools and childcare centres must notify cases of measles to the local public health unit. Public health unit staff will interview the doctor and patient (or carers) to find out how the infection occurred, identify other people at risk of infection, implement control measures (such as immunisation and restrictions on attending school or work).

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**Influenza (flu)**

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<tr>
<th>What is it</th>
<th>Influenza, or flu, is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. There are three main types of influenza virus that cause infection in humans - types A, B and C - and many sub-types or strains. Influenza can occur throughout the year but influenza activity usually peaks in winter. Influenza is a vaccine-preventable illness but a new vaccine needs to be given each year because influenza viruses change (mutate) constantly. A new influenza vaccine is prepared each year to best match the strains predicted for the coming influenza season.</th>
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<tr>
<td>What are the symptoms</td>
<td>People with influenza typically experience some or all of the following symptoms:  - fever and chills  - cough, sore throat and runny or stuffy nose  - muscle aches, joint pains, headaches and fatigue (feeling very tired)  - nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults).  Some symptoms may last for more than a week. Some people may also experience very mild symptoms, particularly if they have some immunity from a previous infection or vaccination. Seek immediate medical advice if the illness quickly becomes worse or if any of the following occurs:  - shortness of breath or rapid breathing  - chest pain  - confusion or sudden dizziness  - persistent vomiting.</td>
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<td>How is it spread</td>
<td>Influenza viruses are mainly spread by droplets made when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Influenza can also be spread through touching surfaces where infected droplets have landed. People with influenza can be infectious from the day before their symptoms start. Adults are most infectious in the first 3-5 days of their illness, while children remain infectious for 7-10 days, and people with weakened immune systems may be infectious for longer.</td>
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<td>Who is at risk</td>
<td>Anyone can get influenza but the following people are at higher risk of complications from influenza infection:  - Individuals aged 65 years or older  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 15 years or older  - Pregnant women  - Individuals aged 6 months and over with medical conditions predisposing to severe influenza. See your GP if concerned.</td>
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<td>Prevention</td>
<td>Influenza vaccination each year before winter arrives is the best way to prevent influenza. Seasonal influenza vaccination is available for anyone aged 6 months and over to protect against influenza, provided they do not have a medical reason that precludes them from receiving influenza vaccines. People at higher risk of influenza complications (see &quot;Who is at risk&quot;) are strongly recommended to have an annual influenza vaccination, and are eligible for free influenza vaccine under the National Influenza Vaccination Program. For more information see the NSW Health Immunisation website at: <a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/">www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/</a>. In addition to people eligible for free vaccine, annual influenza vaccination is also recommended for those who frequently come in to close contact with other people at higher risk of influenza complications (such as health care workers, and family members), to help protect vulnerable people from infection. For more information on general influenza vaccine recommendations refer to latest edition of The Australian Immunisation Handbook available at: <a href="http://immunise.health.gov.au/">http://immunise.health.gov.au/</a>. Take action to stop the spread of influenza by remembering to  - Cover your face when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in a rubbish bin.  - Wash your hands thoroughly and often. Wash hands for at least 10 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, or use an alcohol-based hand rub.  - Stay at home until you’re well. Wait at least 24 hours after your fever resolves so you that you are unlikely to infect other people. Keep sick children away from school and other activities. Call ahead to see a doctor. If you think you may have influenza and you need to see a doctor, call first so the clinic can take precautions to reduce the risk to other people.</td>
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<td>How is it diagnosed</td>
<td>Doctors usually diagnose influenza based on symptoms. The diagnosis can be confirmed by testing fluid taken from the back of the nose and throat or a blood sample. These tests are usually only needed if the illness is severe or if there is an increased risk of complications.</td>
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<td>The symptoms of influenza are usually managed by bed rest and taking simple analgesics for muscle aches and pains. Children under 16 years of age must not be given aspirin-containing medications while ill with influenza. This is due to the increased risk of children developing Reye syndrome, a form of encephalitis and liver degeneration. Specific influenza antiviral medicines can reduce the severity and the duration of influenza but need to be taken within 48 hours of the first symptoms. These medicines need to be prescribed by a doctor, and are usually considered for people at higher risk of complications from influenza infection.</td>
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<td>Public health action focuses on outbreaks in high-risk settings such as health care facilities, special schools, residential care facilities, and Aboriginal communities.</td>
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Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Child & Family School Health Service acknowledges these organisations for the content used in this fact sheet and invites you to visit their websites for more information:

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/calendar
www.schoolatoz.com.au
www.walk.com.au
www.kidshealth.org
www.mendcentral.org