

To Parents, Guardians and Staff

Date 21 December 2012  
Our Ref HPT/RO/JI  
Enquiries to Health Protection  
Extension 35420 / 35422  
Direct Line 0131 465 5420 / 5422  
Email: [Health.Protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Health.Protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

### **SEASONAL INFLUENZA AND MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE**

Please be aware that seasonal influenza is now circulating in Lothian and this can be a severe illness especially in those with chronic diseases such as asthma or those with low immunity due medical treatment.

Symptoms of flu include sudden onset of fever, cough as well as sore throat, aching muscles and joints. The best advice for treating flu in healthy people is to stay at home, rest, drink plenty of fluids and take pain relievers such as paracetamol. Children under 16 should not take any medicines containing aspirin.

Maintaining good cough and hand hygiene, such as covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough and sneeze, disposing of the tissue as soon as possible and cleaning your hands as soon you can are important actions that can help prevent the spread of germs and reduce the risk of transmission.

Unfortunately at this time of year the germ that causes meningitis (Meningococcus) can also be more common. NHS Lothian Health Protection Team encourages staff and parents to be vigilant for symptoms and signs of meningitis. These are listed below:

- High temperature or feeling feverish
- Flu like aches and pains in muscles and joints
- Stiff or sore neck and back
- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- Dislike of bright lights
- Skin rash – small red or purple spots or blotches, which can appear suddenly, spread rapidly and may not fade if pressed
- Drowsiness, loss of consciousness or coma



**Anyone developing such symptoms should seek immediate health advice either from their GP or NHS24 as early treatment saves lives**

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Richard Othieno**  
**Consultant in Public Health Medicine**

**cc:** Head of Schools & Community Services, City of Edinburgh  
Director of Education & Children's Services, Midlothian  
Director of Education & Children's Services, East Lothian  
Director of Education & Children's Services, West Lothian