



HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

Healthy People Living in Healthy Communities Throughout El Dorado County

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To: Local schools
From: Olivia Kasirye, MD, MS
El Dorado County Health Officer
Date: September 3, 2009
Subject: Hand sanitizer guidance

As we consider the best way to help our students and staff be healthy here in our community, we have decided that one way to help insure good hygiene practices is to include the use of not only soap and water but also isopropyl alcohol based hand sanitizer.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of infection and illness. Hand hygiene is a simple thing and it's the best way to prevent infection and illness. Clean hands prevent infections at home, at school, and at work. Hand hygiene practices are a key prevention measure in school.

Isopropyl Alcohol-based sanitizers are very effective germicides against many viruses including the influenza virus (H1N1, seasonal flu, etc.). Millions of school days are annually lost by students due to absenteeism caused by colds and other common illness that are primarily spread among students through contact with contaminated hands. Washing hands with soap and water is best, but where access is limited isopropyl alcohol-based hand sanitizers have been shown to be effective against viruses.

Protocol to follow for use of Isopropyl Alcohol Hand Sanitizer (hand sanitizer)

1. Students are taught by their teachers about the importance of hand hygiene practices in the control of communicable disease. They are taught how to use the hand sanitizer appropriately and under the supervision of an adult.
2. Letters will go out to all parents regarding the use of the sanitizer in our classrooms at the beginning of each school year. Parents may opt out their student out of using the hand sanitizer at school. If parents do not want their child to use hand sanitizer at school, they need to send back the notice located on the parent letter that will be sent home and to return to the classroom teacher to keep on file.
3. In elementary school (K-5) the hand sanitizer will be located only in areas supervised by an adult and under the direction of the adult in charge. The classrooms and school offices will be secured and locked every night.
4. In middle and high school, the hand sanitizer will be available in classrooms in wall dispensers which are readily visible to a teacher and convenient to use by students. The classrooms are secured and locked every night.
5. Students may use the hand sanitizer periodically during each school day, in addition to hand washing with soap and water, after coughing or sneezing, toileting and before eating.
6. Students and staff are instructed to keep the hand sanitizer away from contact with the eyes, mouth, and nose.
7. The hand sanitizer will be kept away from any type of open flame or where sparks could be generated; smokers should not light a cigarette until their hands are completely dry after use.
8. Material Safety Data sheet on isopropyl alcohol based hand sanitizer will be located with the school custodian and also in each school office.

Concern regarding isopropyl alcohol sensitivity

1. If a student appears to develop an allergic reaction to the hand sanitizer, advise the student to stop using the hand sanitizer and to instead wash their hands with soap and water.
2. Notify the students' parents and school nurse or nurse specialist immediately.

Resource: California Department of Public Health, August 24, 2009
CDC website: www.cdc.gov/Features/HandHygiene/

