



# Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department

**November 14, 2011**

**Dear Parents,**

**Over the past week, the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department has investigated reports of pneumonia in schools. We found that between August 15, 2011 and November 10 there may have been a mild increase in pneumonia that may have been caused by the common *Mycoplasma* bacterium, one of the most common causes of pneumonia in children.**

**There are important things students and parents can do to help prevent pneumonia, influenza, and the common cold. Hand washing is the most important. Hand washing at home and in school also helps to avoid spreading common infections that cause cough and fever.**

**Parents can also reduce the spread of common illnesses by keeping children who are sick with fever and colds or cough home from school.**

**The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department will continue to be vigilant in promoting the health of our children. We are taking several steps to complete the investigation and be sure the concerns of the community are addressed.**

**The Health Department will monitor for unusual increase in pneumonia over the next month at your child's school. If your child is diagnosed by a doctor with pneumonia over the next four weeks, we encourage you to contact the school nurse teacher who will be in contact with us. As part of follow-up to our investigation, special testing will be offered to these children. This testing will be for monitoring purposes only and will not change the treatment prescribed by their doctor. Pneumonia is a**

**common childhood illness. It is normal that some children will have pneumonia over the next month. Since important measures have already been taken to prevent the spread of infections such as the common cold and pneumonia, this monitoring will not result in changes or disruption at school.**

**This information will help us to complete our investigation and it will help us to understand the cases of pneumonia that occurred in the past few months.**

**Thank you for you cooperation in our investigation thus far.**

**If you have any questions, please contact Rosemary Stalnaker, School Nurse at 304-354-6148.**

**Sincerely,**

**Patrick Burke, MPH  
Regional Epidemiologist  
Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department  
(304) 485 7374 x 177**