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NEWS RELEASE

Tales From the School Nurse: School Nurses Call for Classroom Cleaning Protocols

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SURVEY REVEALS SCHOOL NURSES TREAT MORE THAN 16 ILL STUDENTS EVERY DAY

Oakland, Calif. (Aug. 13, 2007) – In a recent survey, school nurses say more can be done in America's classrooms to help prevent the spread of illness, especially at the height of cold and flu season when more than half of school nurses send five or more sick children home each day. According to the new survey of school nurses from the National Association of School Nurses about germs at school sponsored by The Clorox Company, 76 percent of school nurses treat more than 16 ill students every day.

In addition to ensuring proper hand washing in the classroom, the survey showed:

- An overwhelming 94 percent of nurses surveyed believe classroom cleaning routines for teachers to follow would help combat germs at school
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents believe disinfecting plays an extremely important role in maintaining a healthy classroom.
- 98 percent disinfect their own offices. It's also important for sick students to stay home.
- More than half of students seen by school nurses came to school ill. Traditionally, school custodial staff members clean areas of the classroom including floors, chalkboards, sinks and bathrooms, but do not disinfect desktops, computer keyboards and mice, and other high-touch areas where germs can harbor. It's left to teachers and parents to clean these items.

A fall 2005 study by University of Arizona further shed light on the importance of cleaning in schools. After comparing bacteria presence on office surfaces of professionals in different occupations, the study ranked classrooms as the #1 workplace for germs and named teachers as having the "germiest" job.

Help to Expel Germs

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are more than 52 million cases of the common cold each year among Americans under the age of 17. With illness keeping students out of school for a national average of four days a year, experts advise parents to devise a plan of action for how to deal with their kids' sick days.

Donna Mazyck, president of the National Association of School Nurses offers the following tips for helping to reduce the spread of germs in the classroom:

- Teach children hand-washing habits; it is one of the most important thing teachers can do to help prevent illness during the school year. Use warm, soapy water and rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds (about the same time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.)
- Use disinfecting wipes regularly on commonly touched classroom surfaces to decrease the level of germs that can cause illness.
- Encourage kids to cough and sneeze into their elbows, not their hands (where they're more likely to spread viruses through touch).
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, as these are easy ways to transmit germs after coming into contact with contaminated surfaces.
- If you are uncertain about when to keep a sick child home, it's important to talk with your school nurse or doctor.

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About the Survey

The survey was conducted by the Ketchum Global Research Network on behalf of The Clorox Company and with members of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) in June 2007. The survey was conducted online among a sample of 1,457 school nurses.

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