

Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family during the 2009-2010 Flu Season

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends four main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at early childhood programs or at home:

1. **Get your children vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu. Parents and caregivers of children less than 6 months of age should also get vaccinated for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu because these children are at higher risk for flu complications and are too young to be vaccinated.
2. **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius measured by mouth) or signs of a fever (chills, feel very warm, flushed appearance, or sweating). Keeping sick children at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
3. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands. Teach your children how to do this.
4. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Parents and child care providers should wash the hands of children who cannot yet wash themselves, and closely monitor children who have not yet mastered proper hand hygiene. (Note that if soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand rubs are useful.)

If flu conditions become MORE severe:

- ▶ Decisions about the length of time staff and children with flu-like symptoms should stay home will be made by local public health officials based on the flu conditions in a particular area.
 - If a decision is made to extend the time sick people should stay home, **parents should keep their children at home for at least 7 days**, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have completely gone away.
 - **If a household member is sick, keep all children in the household home from school and early childhood programs for 5 days** from the time the first person in the household became sick. Parents should monitor themselves and their children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.



Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 flu season:

- ▶ Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick, your usual early childhood program closes, or school is dismissed. Check with your employer to find out if you can stay at home to care for your children, work from home, or set up a flexible work schedule. If this is not possible, find other ways to care for your children at home (such as care by relatives, neighbors, co-workers, or friends).
- ▶ Plan to monitor the health of your children and others in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
- ▶ Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at higher risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age and children with certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes.
- ▶ Update emergency contact lists.
- ▶ Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if early childhood programs are closed, school is dismissed, or your child is sick and must stay home.
- ▶ Talk to your early childhood program and school about their pandemic or emergency plan.

For more information:

- ▶ **Visit: www.flu.gov**
- ▶ **Contact CDC 24 Hours/Every Day**
 - 1 (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636)
 - TTY: (888) 232-6348
 - cdcinfo@cdc.gov