



Preventing and Managing Influenza in Childcare Settings 2016-2017 Season

WHAT IS FLU?

Flu is the common name for the illness caused by the influenza virus. It is a respiratory illness that can be spread easily from person to person and can cause severe illness and life-threatening complications.

FLU SYMPTOMS

- Fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ under arm, 101°F orally or 102°F rectally)
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body Aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Vomiting and diarrhea

SPREAD OF THE FLU

Flu is spread from person to person when someone sick with the flu coughs or sneezes. Flu can also be spread when a person touches something that has the flu virus on it and then touches their nose or mouth. A person will develop the flu about 2 days after contact with the flu virus. People with flu can spread the virus 1 day before they show any signs of illness and for about 5 days after they start feeling ill.

TREATMENT FOR THE FLU

Generally, people with the flu should stay at home, rest, and drink plenty of fluids. Over-the-counter medicine may be used to relieve flu symptoms (e.g., acetaminophen for fever). Antiviral medications such as Relenza or Tamiflu, are medicines prescribed by a doctor to treat or prevent the flu.

PREVENTING FLU IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

- Vaccination. The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated. Everyone over 6 months of age should be vaccinated annually for the flu, especially children 6 months to 19 years old and anyone who cares for children younger than 5 years old. Children 6 months through 8 years old who have not received two doses of the influenza vaccine since July 1, 2010 require two doses of vaccine administered at least 4 weeks apart.
- Hand Washing. Children and childcare providers should wash their hands regularly, especially before meals and feedings, after wiping a child's nose or mouth, after touching objects soiled with saliva or mucus, after diaper changes, and after toileting. Teach children to wash their hands for 15-20 seconds (long enough to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice). Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should only be used when soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty.
- Cover Your Cough. Teach children and staff to cover their mouths and noses with a clean tissue or to use their inside elbow when they cough and sneeze. Tissues should be discarded after a single use.
- Keep Childcare Center Clean. Clean toys, surfaces, and commonly shared items at least daily. Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered disinfectant and follow label instructions exactly. If using store brand chlorine bleach, mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of cool water. Keep all cleaning products out of reach of children.
- Monitor Children for Illness. Observe all infants and children for illness. If a child develops a fever or other concerning signs of illness they should be separated from other children and sent home. Advise the parent to contact the child's doctor. If there is a cluster of illness within the childcare center, the health department should be notified.
- Stay Home When Ill. Ill children and staff should stay home and away from others when they are sick with flu symptoms. Generally, children can return to the childcare center once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., acetaminophen).

RESOURCES

Questions? Contact the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Division of Disease Control at (215) 685-6740 or at acd@phila.gov. Refer to the websites below for additional information:
Philadelphia Department of Public Health: www.phila.gov/health/DiseaseControl/FightingFlu.html
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm

