
Protect Your Family from the Flu

1. **Get your children over the age of 6 months vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available. Infants younger than 6 months of age are particularly vulnerable to flu because they are too young to be vaccinated with flu vaccine. Everyone who lives with or cares for a child less than 6 months old should be vaccinated against both seasonal and 2009 H1N1 flu. Vaccines should be considered for anyone who is at higher risk for complications from seasonal flu or 2009 H1N1 flu.
2. **Plan to monitor the health of your children** and others in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
3. **Children younger than 5 years old are at higher risk of flu complications** compared to older children. **Children with chronic health problems** such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, metabolic conditions, neurologic and neuromuscular disorders, and pregnant women are also at higher risk of having complications from flu. If you are not sure if any of your children are at higher risk for flu complications, please check with a doctor. **Contact your doctor immediately if your child under 5, or your child with a chronic health problem, becomes sick.** The antiviral medicines used to treat flu work best when started within the first 2 days of getting sick. Your doctor will tell you what special care is needed for your child. Antiviral medication is available from some providers and hospitals at no cost if the patient is uninsured or cannot afford the co-pay and the patient is at high risk of flu complications (less than 5 years of age or with certain chronic health conditions.).
4. **Make sure your child's hands are washed often** – or help your younger child wash them – for 20 seconds with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol- based hand sanitizer. Keep alcohol-based hand sanitizers in a place that children cannot reach, but adults can access when they need to dispense it.
5. Have your child **cough and sneeze into a tissue** or into his or her elbow or shoulder if a tissue is not available. Make sure your child throws tissues away right after use and washes his or her hands.
6. **Keep your child away from people who are sick.**
7. **Clean surfaces and objects that your child frequently touches.** Wipe these surfaces with a household disinfectant that is usually used, following the directions on the product label. Additional disinfection of these surfaces beyond routine cleaning is not recommended.
8. When there is flu in your community, consider your child's risk of exposure if they attend public gatherings. In communities with a lot of flu, **people who are at risk of complications from flu should consider staying away from public gatherings** such as sporting events and concerts.
9. **Talk to your doctor** and child's school or early childhood program to **develop a plan** on how to handle your child's special needs.
10. **Recognize if your children are sick.** Some children may not be able to tell you about their symptoms, which can result in a delay in responding to their illness.
11. **Watch carefully for the signs** and symptoms of flu or unusual behavior that may be a sign your child is sick. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache,

tiredness, diarrhea, and vomiting. A fever is a temperature measured by mouth with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, signs and symptoms that may indicate your child has a fever include chills, feeling very warm to the touch, having a flushed appearance, or sweating.

12. **Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks clear fluids** (such as water, broth, sports drinks) to prevent dehydration. For infants, use electrolyte drinks such as Pedialyte®.
13. **If your child has a fever, use fever-reducing medicines that your doctor recommends** based on your child's age. Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) **should not** be given to children or teenagers; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.
14. **Keep your sick child in a separate room** (a sick room) in the house as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are not sick. Consider designating a single person as the main caregiver for the sick child.
15. **Keep your sick child at home** until at least 24 hours after your child no longer has a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Keep your child home unless they need to go to the doctor.

Watch for these warning signs that require urgent medical attention.

- fast breathing, trouble breathing, shortness of breath, or stopping breathing;
 - bluish, purplish, or gray skin color especially around the lips and the inside of the mouth, or around the nails;
 - not drinking enough fluids, refusing to drink;
 - not urinating, decreased number of wet diapers, or no tears when crying;
 - severe or persistent vomiting;
 - not waking up or not interacting (e.g., unusually quiet and inactive, no interest in playing, no interest in favorite toy);
 - being so irritable that the child does not want to be held, or cannot be consoled;
 - pain or pressure in the chest or stomach;
 - sudden dizziness;
 - confusion; and
 - flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough.
16. **Update emergency contact lists.**
 17. **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.
 18. **Talk to your early childhood program** and school about their pandemic or emergency plan.

For More Information:

CDC: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ or www.flu.gov

NM Department of Health: www.nmhealth.org/H1N1/index.shtml

New Mexico CYFD: <http://www.cyfd.org/>