

# Staying Healthy During Flu Season

Influenza is thought to **spread mainly person-to-person** through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

- **Take everyday actions to stay healthy.**
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. 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.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. See tips below.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
  - Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- **Follow public health advice** regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
- Find healthy ways to **deal with stress and anxiety.**
- *Call 1-800-CDC-INFO for more information.*



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 when vaccines are available. 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. **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.
4. **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.



## Young children and hand washing

Parents should wash the hands of children who cannot yet wash themselves, and closely monitor children who have not yet mastered proper hand hygiene. For example, when teaching young children how to wash their hands:

- Turn on the water;
- wet their hands;
- apply a good amount of soap and lather up;
- focus on having them wash their hands for about 20 seconds—about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice;
- wash the front of the hands, the back, in between the fingers, around the nails, and then rinse everything off; and
- wipe their hands dry—preferably with something disposable such as a paper towel, and then use that to turn off the tap.
- When soap and running water are not available, an alcohol-based hand cleaner can also be effective. If alcohol-based hand cleaners are used, they should be kept in a location that children cannot reach, but adults can access when they need to dispense it.



Visit [www.cdc.gov/cleanhands](http://www.cdc.gov/cleanhands) for more information on hand hygiene.

## Can the virus live on surfaces, such as toys, cots, or playground equipment?

- Yes, flu viruses may be spread when a child touches droplets left by coughs and sneezes on hard surfaces (such as doorknobs or tables) or objects (such as toys or markers) and then touches his or her mouth or nose. However, it is not necessary to disinfect these surfaces beyond routine cleaning.
- Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand or mouth contact with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.

### Click on the following links for additional information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

[http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/2009-10/pdf/pan\\_flu\\_flier.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/2009-10/pdf/pan_flu_flier.pdf)

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print.htm#parent>

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/toolkit/parentfactsheet2.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childrentreatment.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>

[http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childcare/toolkit/pdf/questions\\_childcare.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childcare/toolkit/pdf/questions_childcare.pdf)

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm#d>

<http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/Swine%20Flu/DHHR%20-%20Managing%20H1N1%20Swine%20Flu%20Illness%202.pdf>

<http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/Swine%20Flu/BHHF%20Talking%20Tips%20for%20Parents%20Flu%2005%2009.pdf>

