

Flu Guidance for Schools and Childcare Centers

1. What is influenza (flu)?

Influenza (flu) is an infectious respiratory disease caused by viruses (germs) that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It causes mild to severe illness in people. Flu is usually spread from person to person through droplets that are made when people with the flu cough, sneeze, or talk. Sometimes people may be infected by touching something that has a virus on it and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.

2. What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, headaches, extreme tiredness, and muscle aches. Some people might have vomiting and diarrhea, but this is more common in children than adults.

Children younger than 5 years old, especially those younger than 2, and those with chronic illness including asthma are at higher risk for serious illness from flu.

3. How is the flu treated in children?

Children with flu-like symptoms should **not** be given aspirin. Antiviral treatment for the flu works best when given early during illness. Children at high risk for severe illness from the flu, as well as family members and other household contacts should call their doctor right away to discuss possible treatment.

4. Should children and staff stay home if they are sick with the flu?

Yes. Children and staff should stay home until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. After the fever is gone, it's common to have a lingering cough, but it's okay to return to school.

5. What steps can we take to prevent the spread of the flu?

Encourage children and staff to:

- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when they cough or sneeze.
- Practice good hand hygiene by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before meals/snacks, after toileting, and after changing diapers.
- Get a yearly flu vaccine.
- Stay home if they are sick with the flu.



Key Points:

- Getting a flu vaccination each year is the best way to prevent flu.
- Students, teachers and other school staff should stay home if they are sick with the flu.
- Find free or low-cost flu vaccinations near you. Visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip or dial 2-1-1.

For more information:

Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Flu.htm>

California Department of
Public Health
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Influenza.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm>

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