



Preventing the Spread of Influenza in a Day Care Setting How You Can Help

Influenza, or the “flu,” is a viral illness that is spread from person to person when people cough or sneeze near one another. Sometimes it can be spread when a person touches nose drainage or saliva from an infected person and then touches one’s own mouth or nose before washing hands.

The best way to prevent serious illness from influenza is to get immunized. Health care officials encourage all persons over aged 6 months are encouraged to receive an influenza vaccine (the “flu shot”) each year. Immunization is strongly recommended for persons at higher risk of complications from getting the flu.

For more information, visit the Website of the Department of Health Services at:

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/influenza/index.htm>

Immunization (Flu Shot)

All children, day care staff, and volunteer in the following categories should be immunized

1. children 6-23 months of age
2. children with chronic medical conditions*
3. children aged 6 months – 18 years receiving long-term aspirin therapy and might be at risk for Reye syndrome after influenza infection
4. day care providers who are pregnant during influenza season
5. day care providers of children less than 6 months old

* People with chronic medical conditions include those who have chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, including asthma (hypertension is not considered a high-risk condition), persons who required regular medical follow-up or hospitalization during the preceding year because of chronic metabolic diseases (inc. diabetes mellitus), renal dysfunction, hemoglobinopathies, or immunosuppression (inc. immunosuppression caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus [HIV]), and persons with any condition (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders) that can compromise respiratory function, the handling of respiratory secretions, or increase the risk for aspiration

Coughing and Sneezing

Children and their care providers should practice good health habits when coughing or sneezing by

1. Covering their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
2. Throw the tissue into a waste container immediately after use
3. Wash hands (as outlined below) immediately after disposing of tissue

When necessary, care providers should assist children, then immediately wash their own hands. Care providers should not allow children or anyone else to share drinking cups or eating utensils.

Hand Hygiene

Where there are sinks, plenty of soap and paper towels should be available.

To help protect against respiratory illnesses, care provider should wash their hands and instruct children to do so:

1. after coughing and sneezing
2. between contacts with infants and children, as much as possible
3. before and after eating
4. after hands touch another person who has a cough or cold
5. whenever hands are not clean

Hands should be washed with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds with rubbing action, then rinsed, and dried with a paper towel. A clean paper towel should be used to turn off water faucets.

Stay Home When Sick

Children should be observed for symptoms of respiratory illness. Children, staff, and volunteers who develop symptoms of influenza (fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache, muscle aches) should be sent home.

If ill persons are not able to go home right away, they should be confined in a separate area away from others. Persons with influenza should stay at home for at least 5 to 7 days after onset of symptoms.