

**You are being provided with this fact sheet:**

- because you or your child may have been exposed to influenza.** If you believe your child has developed influenza, contact your health care provider. Notify your child care provider or preschool if a diagnosis of influenza is made.
  
  - for informational purposes only.**
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**What is influenza?**

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold.

**What are the common symptoms of influenza?**

- Fever\*
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches, chills
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur but are more common in children than adults.

**How is influenza spread?**

Influenza viruses spread by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze, or talk. Droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. They can also spread when a person touches a surface that has influenza virus on it and then touches their own mouth, eyes, or nose. Most healthy adults with influenza can spread the virus from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after getting sick. Young children and people with weakened immune systems might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

**Who is at risk for influenza?**

Everyone is at risk for influenza. However, infants and children under 5 years of age (especially those under 2 years of age), people over age 65, pregnant women, and people with chronic health problems are at increased risk for serious complications from the flu. Complications of flu can include pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.

**How can I protect myself and my family from influenza?**

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting an influenza vaccination every year. Vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older, except for very rare exceptions. Contact your health care provider for information.

**How is influenza treated?**

There is no cure for influenza. Measures such as getting enough rest, eating healthy foods, and drinking plenty of fluids can help relieve symptoms. Sometimes, medications called antivirals can be taken early on in the disease course to lessen symptoms and reduce the likelihood of severe complications, for more information contact your healthcare provider.

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**Child Care Health Outreach Program**

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### **How can the spread of influenza be prevented?**

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year. It is especially important for anyone who works with small children or high-risk populations to get a flu shot, as this helps protect the people they care for. Because infants cannot be immunized until they are 6 months old, it is very important for infant room teachers to be vaccinated.

### **What are other ways to reduce the spread of influenza?**

- Practice frequent, careful handwashing for 20 seconds with warm soapy water.
- Stay home when sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching the eyes, mouth, or nose.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover mouth and nose with tissue and dispose of it in a sanitary manner. If tissues are unavailable, cough or sneeze into the sleeve of your arm.
- Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces throughout the day.

### **Exclude for group setting?**

Staff and children who are ill should stay home until:

- they are fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medications,
- they are feeling well enough to participate in daily activities, and
- they do not meet any other exclusion criteria.

\* Fever is defined as a temperature above 101°F (38.3°C) by any method or above 100.4°F (38.0°C) for infants younger than 2 months old.

### **References:**

*American Academy of Pediatrics*

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Website)*

- Influenza (Flu). Accessed December 2020.

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