



OFFICE OF HEALTH SERVICES  
10 Civic Center Plaza  
Mankato, MN 56001

## **Protecting Yourself and Your Family Influenza (Flu) Information for Parents**

### **What is influenza (flu)?**

Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease that can be prevented by immunization. It is not the same as the “stomach flu.” Flu is caused by a virus that attacks the nose, throat and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death.

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

Influenza symptoms come on quickly in the form of fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, extreme tiredness, stuffed-up nose and body aches. These symptoms can be severe and put you in bed for several days.

### **What if you think your child has the flu?**

- Keep your child home from school if they have a fever of 100 degrees F or greater. The student may also need to stay home if they have a sore throat and/or coughing that disrupts their daily activities and ability to concentrate.
- Have your child rest and drink lots of fluids.
- Antibiotics will not help a person recover from the flu because flu is caused by a virus, not a bacteria.
- Children may need fever reducing medications to keep their fever under control. Follow your child’s doctor’s instructions.
- If you are concerned that something does not seem right with your child, call your doctor or clinic.

### **What can you do to protect your child and family?**

- Get vaccinated. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu shot every year.
- Avoid being exposed to others who are sick with a flu-like illness.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve.
- Clean your hands often - with soap and water or an alcohol-based, waterless hand sanitizer.
- Do not share drinking cups and straws.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (door knobs, refrigerator handles, phones, water faucets).

**Call your child’s school if your child is home with an influenza-like illness. If you have any questions or concerns contact the nurse and/or health service at your child’s school.**