



Prevention and Control Measures: Influenza or Influenza-like Illness in Schools or Child Care Facilities

Transmission:

- Influenza can be spread when droplets from an ill person's cough or sneeze come into contact with mucous membranes in the eyes, mouth, and nose of another person, or when a person touches a surface or object contaminated with influenza virus.

Prevention and Control Measures:

- Remind faculty, staff, parents, and children to get vaccinated against influenza
- Limit group activities when possible
- Recommendations for children and staff:
 - Always cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, if you do not have a tissue available.
 - Dispose of used facial tissues that contain nasal secretions.
 - Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Stay home until fever free for 24 hours.
 - Practice proper [hand washing hygiene](#).
- Continue routine cleaning and disinfection processes for frequently touched surfaces or common areas with appropriate cleaner. Influenza viruses are generally susceptible to standard cleaning products, including those that contain detergent, chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, and alcohols.



For More Information: Visit cdc.gov and type [influenza](#) in the SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health
Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104
800-338-8374

alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases

11/13/13 11/13/13 11/13/13

How to Clean and Disinfect Schools to Help Slow the Spread of Flu

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of a broad approach to preventing infectious diseases in schools. To help slow the spread of influenza (flu), the first line of defense is getting vaccinated. Other measures include covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands, and keeping sick people away from others. Below are tips on how to slow the spread of flu specifically through cleaning and disinfecting.

1. Know the difference between cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.

Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process **works by either cleaning or disinfecting** surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection.



2. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.

Follow your school's standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys. Some schools may also require daily disinfecting these items. Standard procedures often call for disinfecting specific areas of the school, like bathrooms.

Immediately clean surfaces and objects that are visibly soiled. If surfaces or objects are soiled with body fluids or blood, use gloves and other standard precautions to avoid coming into contact with the fluid. Remove the spill, and then clean and disinfect the surface.

3. Simply do routine cleaning and disinfecting.

It's important to match your cleaning and disinfecting activities to the types of germs you want to remove or kill. Most studies have shown that the flu virus can live and potentially infect a person for only 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on a surface. Therefore, it is not necessary to close schools to clean or disinfect every surface in the building to slow the spread of flu. Also, if students and staff are dismissed because the school cannot function normally (e.g., high absenteeism during a flu outbreak), it is not necessary to do extra cleaning and disinfecting.

Flu viruses are relatively fragile, so standard cleaning and disinfecting practices are sufficient to remove or kill them. Special cleaning and disinfecting processes, including wiping down walls and ceilings, frequently using room air deodorizers, and fumigating, are not necessary or recommended. These processes can irritate eyes, noses, throats, and skin; aggravate asthma; and cause other serious side effects.



4. Clean and disinfect correctly.

Always follow label directions on cleaning products and disinfectants. Wash surfaces with a general household cleaner to remove germs. Rinse with water, and follow with an EPA-registered disinfectant to kill germs. Read the label to make sure it states that EPA has approved the product for effectiveness against influenza A virus.

If an EPA-registered disinfectant is not available, use a fresh chlorine bleach solution. To make and use the solution:

- Add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water. For a larger supply of disinfectant, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Apply the solution to the surface with a cloth.
- Let it stand for 3 to 5 minutes.
- Rinse the surface with clean water.



If a surface is not visibly dirty, you can clean it with an EPA-registered product that both cleans (removes germs) and disinfects (kills germs) instead. Be sure to read the label directions carefully, as there may be a separate procedure for using the product as a cleaner or as a disinfectant. Disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a certain period of time.

Use disinfecting wipes on electronic items that are touched often, such as phones and computers. Pay close attention to the directions for using disinfecting wipes. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of contact time. Make sure that the electronics can withstand the use of liquids for cleaning and disinfecting.

Routinely wash eating utensils in a dishwasher or by hand with soap and water. Wash and dry bed sheets, towels, and other linens as you normally do with household laundry soap, according to the fabric labels. Eating utensils, dishes, and linens used by sick persons do not need to be cleaned separately, but they should not be shared unless they've been washed thoroughly. Wash your hands with soap and water after handling soiled dishes and laundry items.

5. Use products safely.

Pay close attention to hazard warnings and directions on product labels. Cleaning products and disinfectants often call for the use of gloves or eye protection. For example, gloves should always be worn to protect your hands when working with bleach solutions.

Do not mix cleaners and disinfectants unless the labels indicate it is safe to do so. Combining certain products (such as chlorine bleach and ammonia cleaners) can result in serious injury or death.

Ensure that custodial staff, teachers, and others who use cleaners and disinfectants read and understand all instruction labels and understand safe and appropriate use. This might require that instructional materials and training be provided in other languages.

6. Handle waste properly.

Follow your school's standard procedures for handling waste, which may include wearing gloves. Place no-touch waste baskets where they are easy to use. Throw disposable items used to clean surfaces and items in the trash immediately after use. Avoid touching used tissues and other waste when emptying waste baskets. Wash your hands with soap and water after emptying waste baskets and touching used tissues and similar waste.

Protect Your Children and Others from Flu During the School Year

Parents and guardians:

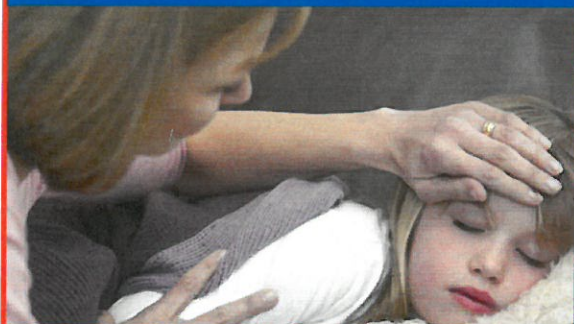
You can protect the health of your children by teaching them to practice healthy habits during the school year. When children get sick with flu, they may be able to spread it to others for a longer period of time than adults. Plan to keep your children home if they're sick. By practicing healthy habits, you and your family will be doing your part to help prevent the spread of flu.

Take these actions to help keep your family well:

Get your family vaccinated.

Plan to keep them home if they're sick.

- If your children get sick at school, make plans to pick them up as soon as possible.
- Keep your children home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without using medicine that lowers fever.



Make sure they cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze.

- Throw away dirty tissues.
- Use their sleeve or elbow if they don't have a tissue.
- Wash or sanitize their hands.



Teach them to wash their hands often at home and at school.

- Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice).
- Provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol in case they don't have soap and water.



Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.

- Use soap and water, a bleach and water solution, or products with a label that says "EPA-approved" to clean items, such as toys and TV remotes.
- Always follow the directions on product labels.



www.cdc.gov/npi

1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

www.cdc.gov/info

TTY:888-232-6348

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Division of Global Migration and Quarantine





The Flu:

A Guide for Parents

FLU INFORMATION

What is the flu?

Influenza (the flu) is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses. There are many different influenza viruses that are constantly changing. Flu viruses cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the United States each year.

The flu can be very dangerous for children. Each year about 20,000 children younger than 5 years old are hospitalized from flu complications, like pneumonia.

How serious is the flu?

Flu illness can vary from mild to severe. While the flu can be serious even in people who are otherwise healthy, it can be especially dangerous for young children and children of any age who have certain long-term health conditions, including asthma (even mild or controlled), neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions, chronic lung disease, heart disease, blood disorders, endocrine

disorders (such as diabetes), kidney, liver, and metabolic disorders, and weakened immune systems due to disease or medication. Children with these conditions and children who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy can have severe illness from the flu.

How does the flu spread?

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get the flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or nose.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with the flu will not have a fever.

How long can a sick person spread the flu to others?

People with the flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. However, children and people with weakened immune systems can infect others for longer periods of time, especially if they still have symptoms.

PROTECT YOUR CHILD

How can I protect my child against the flu?

To protect against the flu, the first and most important thing you can do is to get a flu vaccine for yourself and your child.

- ▶ Vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older.
- ▶ It's especially important that young children and children with long-term health conditions get vaccinated. (See list of conditions in "How serious is the flu?")
- ▶ Caregivers of children with health conditions or of children younger than 6 months old should get vaccinated. (Babies younger than 6 months are too young to be vaccinated themselves.)
- ▶ Another way to protect babies is to vaccinate pregnant women. Research shows that flu vaccination gives some protection to the baby both while the woman is pregnant and for several months after the baby is born.

Flu vaccine is updated annually to protect against the flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season. Flu vaccines are made using strict safety and production measures. Over the years, millions of flu vaccines have been given in the United States with a very good safety record.



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Is there a medicine to treat the flu?

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat influenza illness. They can make people feel better and get better sooner. Antivirals can mean the difference between having milder illness instead of very serious illness that could result in a hospital stay. Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics, which fight against bacterial infections. They work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. It's very important that antiviral drugs are used early to treat the flu in people who are very sick (for example, people who are in the hospital) or who are at high risk of serious flu complications. Other people with flu illness may also benefit from taking antiviral drugs. These drugs can be given to children and pregnant women.

What are some of the other ways I can protect my child against the flu?

In addition to getting vaccinated, you and your children can take everyday steps to help prevent the spread of germs:

These include the following:

- ▶ Stay away from people who are sick.
- ▶ If your child is sick with flu illness, try to keep him or her in a separate room from others in the household, if possible.
- ▶ CDC recommends that your sick child stay home for at least 24 hours after his or her fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- ▶ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after it has been used.
- ▶ Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- ▶ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- ▶ Clean and disinfect hard surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs, including bathroom surfaces, kitchen counters and toys for children. Clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.



These everyday steps are a good way to reduce your chances of getting sick. However, a yearly flu vaccine is the best protection against flu illness.

IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is 5 years and older and does not have other health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

Children younger than 5 years of age – especially those younger than 2 years old – and children with certain chronic conditions, including asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system, are at high risk of serious flu-related complications. If your child is at high risk for flu complications, call your doctor or take them to the doctor right away if they develop flu symptoms.

What if my child seems very sick?

Even previously healthy children can get very sick from the flu.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is 5 years or older and does not have other health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed:

- ▶ Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- ▶ Bluish or gray skin color
- ▶ Not drinking enough fluids (not going to the bathroom or not making as much urine as they normally do)
- ▶ Severe or persistent vomiting
- ▶ Not waking up or not interacting
- ▶ Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- ▶ Flu symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- ▶ Has other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or asthma) and develops flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough.

Can my child go to school, day care or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid giving the flu to other children or caregivers.

When can my child go back to school after having the flu?

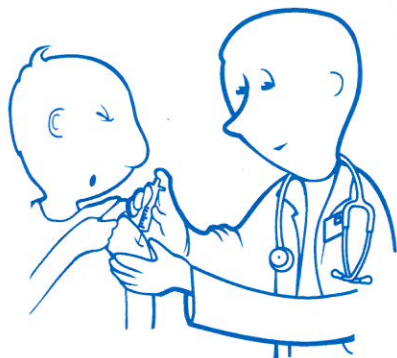
Keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu or call 800-CDC-INFO

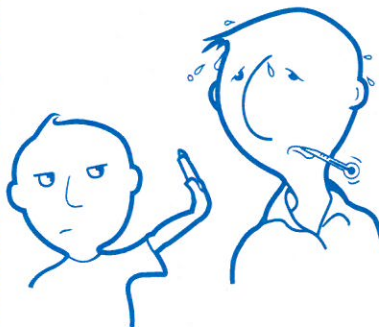
INFLUENZA (FLU) Talking to Children About Flu

Advice for Parents on Talking to Children About the Flu

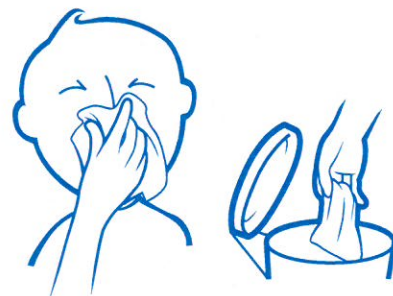
Focus on what your child can do to fight the flu and to not spread flu to others:



Have your child get a flu vaccine. The flu shot may pinch, but it will help protect them from getting sick later. A flu vaccine given as a nasal spray may also be available.



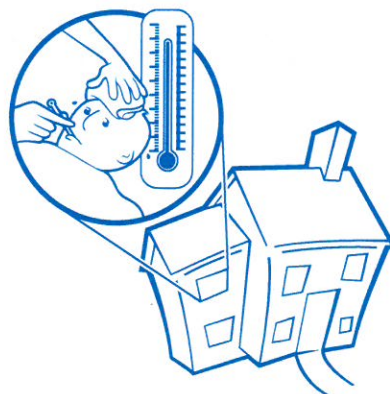
Encourage them to try to stay away from people who are sick.



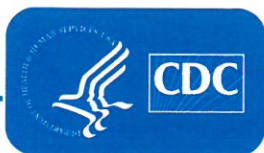
Encourage them to cough and sneeze into a tissue when they are sick. Throw the tissue in the trash right away. If they do not have a tissue, they should cover their mouth and nose with their arm.



Encourage them to wash hands often with soap and warm water for 15-20 seconds. Set a good example by doing this yourself.



Encourage them to stay home from work and school if they are sick, and stay away from people until they are better.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

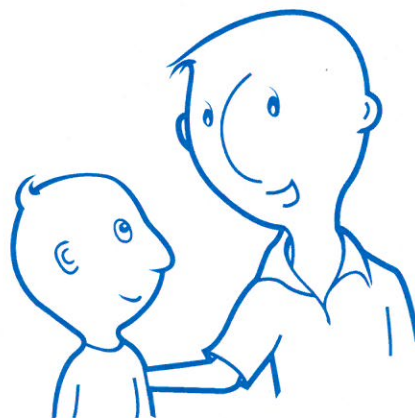
INFLUENZA (FLU) Talking to Children About Flu

Encourage healthy habits: eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep, and getting exercise.



.....

Use their questions as a chance to tell them how to avoid the flu and how to not spread flu and other germs.



For more information call CDC info at 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or go to www.cdc.gov/flu.