ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
IDPH
PROTECTING HEALTH, IMPROVING LIVES

SEASONAL INFLUENZA (FLU) FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

Some cases of influenza (flu) have been reported from your child's school or classroom. Flu is different from the common cold. It can cause fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, and vomiting. Flu can be very serious and may even cause death in some people with chronic health conditions, young children, pregnant women, or elderly persons.

HOW DOES THE FLU SPREAD?

Flu spreads between people when those sick with the flu cough, sneeze, or even talk. The flu virus can be spread to people up to 6 feet away. Flu can also spread when people touch their face or eyes after touching something that a sick person has touched.

QUICK STATS

In the U.S. every day, an estimated 55 million students and 7 million staff attend more than 130,000 public and private schools. Implementing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "Take 3 Actions" would aid in preventing influenza infection among one-fifth of the total U.S. population (CDC, 2021).

Flu vaccination reduced the risk of a flu-associated death by 65% among healthy children and 51% among children with high-risk medical conditions (CDC, 2017).

HOW TO PREVENT THE FLU?

Use the CDC's "Take 3 Actions"

1. Take time to get a flu vaccine. Flu vaccination is the best way to prevent the flu. IDPH strongly recommends all Illinois residents older than 6 months old get the flu vaccine as soon as possible to prevent the flu unless they have a medical reason not to be vaccinated.
2. Take everyday preventive actions.
    a. Avoid close contact with ill persons.
    b. Keep your child home if they have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher).
    c. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or upper sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
    d. Frequently wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
    e. Frequently clean and disinfect surfaces that are high-touch areas.
3. Take Influenza antiviral medicines, if prescribed. Antiviral drugs can make flu illness milder and shorten the time a person is sick with the flu. They may also prevent serious flu complications. (Flu antiviral drugs are not designed to treat COVID-19.)

RESOURCES

cdc.gov/flu dph.illinois.gov/flu cdc.gov/flu/prevent/preventing.htm