



Get Ready for Seasonal Flu

Influenza is a contagious disease that easily spreads every winter, usually between October and May. It can cause mild to severe illness that may result in hospitalizations and at times can lead to death.

Why should we worry about the Flu?

Influenza Complications in Children:

- Primary Influenza Pneumonia
- Ear infections, croup, Bronchiolitis, pneumonia
- Secondary Infections
- Myositis (inflammation in the muscles), Myocarditis (inflammation of the heart)
- Seizures (including febrile seizures), Encephalopathy (brain disease or brain damage), Post-infectious encephalitis (inflammation of the brain tissue)
- Exacerbation of Asthma or heart Disease
- Death

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each year an average of more than 20,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized because of influenza complications.

- Severe complications are most common in children younger than 2 years old
- There were 187 Pediatric Influenza Deaths in 2017 – 2018
 - 50% of hospitalized children had no previous medical conditions
 - More than 57% died after admission to the hospital
 - 78% were not vaccinated

To learn **key facts about seasonal flu**, click here

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm>

To learn **how the flu spreads**, click here

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/spread.htm>

To learn more about **flu symptoms & complications**, the **differences between cold & flu symptoms**, and **emergency warning signs of flu sickness**, click here

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/symptoms.htm>

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated each year.

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older.

To learn **Frequently Asked Influenza (Flu) Questions: 2019-2020 Season**, click here

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2019-2020.htm>

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There are recommended procedures that you can implement in order to protect the health and safety of children, as well as staff in your program.

To read **information for schools & child care providers**, click here
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm>

Take the following Steps NOW to Help Your Program Prepare:

- Encourage all staff, children, and parents to get the flu vaccine
- Encourage children, parents, and staff to take the following everyday preventive actions
To learn about every day preventive actions, click here
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/everyday_preventive.pdf
- Examine and revise your program's written plan for seasonal flu.
To review recommendations and necessary components of a written plan for seasonal flu from Caring for Our Children, click here
<http://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/9.2.4.4>
- Help families and staff to understand the important roles they play in reducing the spread of flu, as well as information about exclusion of children from child care, click here
https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/disasters_dpac_InfluenzaHandout.pdf
- Plan to distribute a customized letter to parents about influenza prevention and control practices in your program. To read a sample letter, click here
https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/Parent_Flu_Letter_2017-2018.pdf
- Update family contact information and children records so parents can be reached quickly if they need to pick up their sick child.

All child care programs and schools are required to post influenza educational material where it can be easily viewed within the program. The purpose is to ensure that families receive information about influenza and the benefits of vaccination.

For options in posting influenza educational material for parents, click below
<https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2423.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/flu-guide-for-parents-2018.pdf>