

## **The Flu and You! Important Information for Child Care Providers**

Anyone can get influenza or the “flu”, but children younger than 5 years of age – especially those younger than 2 years old – are at high risk of serious flu-related complications. Each year in the US, thousands of young children are hospitalized due to flu complications and many more have to visit a doctor, an urgent care center, or the emergency room because of flu. In rare cases, flu complications can lead to death.

To help prevent the flu, CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine every year. Children under 6 months are at very high risk complications, but are too young to get a flu vaccine, so it is especially important to take steps to protect them.

### **How Caregivers can Prevent Flu in Young Children**

#### **1. Take Time to Get a Vaccine**

- This is the first and best way to protect against the flu. By getting vaccinated, you will be less likely to get the flu and so less likely to spread the flu to the child.
- If you care for a child or children over 6 months old, they should get a flu vaccine each year.
- Encourage other caregivers to be vaccinated every year.
- To find a place near you to get a flu vaccine, visit the [HealthMap Vaccine Finder](#).

#### **2. Prevent Germs from Spreading**

- Keep yourself and the child/children in your care away from people who are sick as much as you can.
- If you get the flu or flu symptoms, avoid contact with others, including the child/children in your care.
- Use your elbow to cover your nose/mouth when you cough/sneeze; or use a tissue and throw it away.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs often spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched, especially when someone is ill.

#### **3. Antiviral Drugs Can Treat Flu Illness**

- If you do get the flu, ask your doctor about antiviral drugs. These are not antibiotics but can make your illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

To find out what's new for the 2016-17 influenza season, visit CDC's [Frequently Asked Flu Questions 2016-2017 Flu Season](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2016-2017.htm)(<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2016-2017.htm>)

**For more information about immunizations for all ages, visit the NH Immunization Program website: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/> or call 603-271-4482.**