

Influenza (“The Flu”)

Recommendations for Child-Care Facilities

Influenza (“the flu”) is a respiratory disease that spreads easily. It is characterized by the sudden onset of fever, body aches, sore throat, headache, tiredness and cough, and, in children, also can cause diarrhea and vomiting. The following recommendations can help prevent the spread of influenza in child-care facilities.

- **Any ill staff or child should not attend day care.**
- Wash hands frequently using soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing the ABCs). Dry hands with paper towels or automatic dryers. If cloth towels are used, replace them with clean towels several times a day. Young children should be instructed and assisted to ensure proper hand washing. Restrooms should be checked regularly to ensure that soap and towels are available.
- Proper hand washing is particularly important after wiping your or someone else’s nose or after contact with drool, saliva or nose drainage.
- Staff and children always should cover their mouths when coughing and use a disposable tissue when sneezing or blowing their noses. Tissues should be thrown away immediately, and then hands should be washed using soap and water. (If you cannot wash hands, rub hands with an alcohol hand sanitizer.) Make sure tissues for runny noses and sneezing are available in the day-care center and cars.
- Staff and children who are in high-risk groups should get a flu shot. It is never too late in the flu season to get a flu shot.
- Closing a day care in the event of an outbreak usually is not necessary.
- All children and staff should avoid sharing glasses, forks, spoons, toys, etc.
- Common-use surfaces – such as door handles, handrails, eating surfaces, toys, etc. – should be cleaned frequently with disinfectants. Commercial disinfectants or bleach solutions are appropriate. (Mixing $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bleach with 1 gallon of water makes a bleach solution. Bleach solutions should be prepared daily.)