

Community Health Services

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www.kingcounty.gov/health

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are seeing children with flu-like illness in our child care/early childhood program. Symptoms of flu include fever with cough or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and tiredness. Some people also have vomiting or diarrhea.

Please monitor your child for symptoms of flu. A child with symptoms of flu should stay at home and should not attend child care/school.

If your child has flu symptoms, s/he can return to child care/school only after her/his fever has been gone for 24 hours without any fever-reducing medicines. Any medicine containing *ibuprofen* or *acetaminophen* is a fever-reducing medicine.

Here are things that you and your family can do to help prevent the flu:

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing.

Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth as germs are spread this way.

Get vaccinated for both seasonal and H1N1 flu. It is especially important that children age 6 months through 4 years (particularly those under two years) are vaccinated for H1N1 flu because they are more likely to become very sick and need hospital care.

H1N1 influenza vaccine will be available to more people as vaccine supply increases, but people who are age 6 months through age 24 years are a priority for H1N1 influenza vaccination. Other people who are a priority include pregnant women, caregivers of children under age 6 months, and people up through age 64 years with medical conditions such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes.

If you or your children have the flu or a flu-like illness:

You probably don't need to have a lab test or take antiviral medicine. If someone has the flu now, it is very likely that it is H1N1 flu. Testing for H1N1 flu is necessary only when patients are sick enough to be hospitalized or have severe illness. Antiviral medications are not recommended except for people at higher risk for complications (see below) or with severe illness.

Many people with symptoms of flu do not need to see a health care provider. Most people experience and recover from H1N1 flu just as they do from seasonal flu. People with flu symptoms who are at high risk for serious illness from the flu, and people who have severe flu symptoms, should see a health care provider. People at high risk include:

- children under 2 years old
- people with chronic illness (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes)
- pregnant women and women who have had a baby less than 2 weeks ago

Children and staff don't need a note from a doctor to return to the program after they are well again. Writing notes takes time away from patients who need immediate medical care.

For more information about H1N1 flu virus, please see Public Health's web site: www.kingcounty.gov/health/H1N1 or call the Flu Hotline: 1-877-903-5464