

Influenza

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

- because you or your child may have been exposed to influenza. If you believe your child has developed influenza, contact your medical provider. Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately after the diagnosis has been made.
 - for informational purposes only.
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What is influenza?

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold.

What are the common symptoms of influenza?

- Fever*
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny/stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Stomach symptoms such as nausea or vomiting

How is influenza spread?

Influenza viruses spread by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. Droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. They can also spread when a person touches a surface that has influenza virus on it and then touches their own mouth, eyes, or nose. Most healthy adults with the flu can spread the virus from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after getting sick. Young children and people with weakened immune systems might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

Who is at risk for influenza?

Everyone is at risk for influenza. However, infants and children under 5 years of age, people over 50, pregnant women, and people with chronic health problems are at increased risk for serious complications from the flu. Complications of flu can include pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.

How can I protect myself and my family from influenza?

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting an influenza vaccination yearly. Vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. Contact your healthcare provider for information.

* Fever is defined as: temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or above.

Child Care Health Program

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Adapted from the Snohomish Health District

How is influenza treated?

- Contact your healthcare provider if you think you may have influenza. Antiviral medications may be prescribed to treat influenza, particularly for people who have severe symptoms or are at risk of complications.
- How is the spread of influenza reduced?
- The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year.
- Careful, frequent handwashing for 20 seconds with warm soapy water.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching the eyes, mouth, or nose.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover mouth and nose with tissue and dispose of it in a sanitary manner. If tissues are unavailable, cough or sneeze into the sleeve of your arm.
- Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces throughout the day.

Exclude for group setting?

Staff and children who are ill should stay home until they are fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medications, are feeling well enough to participate in daily activities and staff members determine they can care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children in the group.

Reference:

American Academy of Pediatrics

- [Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools](#) pages 111-112

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