

# Information on the Flu & Flu Vaccines



## What is influenza or “the flu”?

The flu is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs. It is spread easily by coughing, sneezing, and talking. Most people are sick for about a week, and then feel better. Young children- especially young infants- can get very sick from the flu. Some children and adults die each year. As the U.S. begins its fall and winter flu season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is concerned that a new virus- the novel H1N1 (swine flu) virus may cause more illness, which may be severe in some cases.

## Why are children at high risk for flu infections?

Children have the highest chance of getting sick from the flu and often spread the germs throughout their communities. This fall there is concern about both seasonal flu and H1N1 2009 flu.

## What are the symptoms of the flu?

People with the flu develop a high fever, headache, dry cough, sore throat and aching muscles very quickly. Children may have stomach problems. Some people with the flu have NO symptoms at all and can still spread flu to others.

## How can children be protected from the flu?

Flu vaccine is the single best way to protect against the flu. There will be 2 different flu vaccines available this fall. It is important to make sure children (and some adults) get both kinds. Seasonal flu vaccine is or will be available soon. H1N1 2009 vaccine is expected to be available in the fall. Seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against H1N1 2009 flu.





**What can I do to protect my daycare/preschool children?**  
Get vaccinated with seasonal flu vaccine and encourage others in contact with children to get vaccinated with seasonal flu vaccine - parents, siblings, teachers and other day care staff. Getting vaccinated with both seasonal and H1N1 2009 flu vaccines is especially important for those taking care of infants younger than 6 months of age. These babies are too young to be given either vaccine.

**Is flu vaccine recommended for children in daycare or preschool?**

Yes. CDC and MDCH recommend that children 6 months of age and older receive both flu vaccines- seasonal and H1N1 2009- to help them stay healthy, although neither vaccine is required for school or daycare entry.

**What are some of the everyday precautions I can take?**

Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread easily this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

**What should the daycare do if a child gets the flu?**

If a child or day care worker gets the flu, CDC recommends that they stay home from work or school and not go out into the community, unless to seek care from a medical provider, until they are fever-free for 24 hours. It is very important to keep kids home when they are sick.



For more information about flu and flu vaccine, contact your health care provider or local health department.

Additional information is available:

Michigan Dept of Community Health • [michigan.gov/flu](http://michigan.gov/flu)  
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention • [cdc.gov/flu](http://cdc.gov/flu)