

H1N1 (Swine) Flu

Frequently Asked Questions

Child Care/Early Childhood Programs

🌟 What should child care/early childhood programs do to prevent the spread of flu?

You can prevent the spread of flu by:

- Getting vaccinated. Consider vaccination for seasonal flu and the H1N1 (Swine) Flu when the vaccine is available.
- Practicing good hand hygiene. Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Practicing respiratory etiquette. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or a sleeve.
- Staying home if sick. Stay away from others for at least 24 hours after fever free.
- Performing a daily health check of children.
- Sending sick staff and children home immediately. Move sick staff or children to a separate, but supervised, space until their parents can take them home
- Routinely cleaning surfaces and items that children frequently touch.

🌟 What is a daily health check?

The purpose of the daily health check is to observe and assess the child's overall health. During the daily health check the early child care provider should look for:

- A change in the child's behavior (crankiness, unusual crying, decreased appetite, or a lack of interest in playing),
- A report of illness in the child or family member,
- A report of a recent visit to a health care provider by the child or family member, and
- Any signs or symptoms of flu

🌟 What are the symptoms of flu, including H1N1 (Swine) Flu?

Symptoms of flu include fever (temperature measured by mouth with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius) and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, chills, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

🌟 Who is at higher risk for complications from flu, including H1N1 (Swine) Flu?

Pregnant women (and women up to 2 weeks post-partum), people of any age with chronic health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease), people 65 years of age and older, children younger than 5 years of age and children with neurodevelopmental disorders (like cerebral palsy or developmental delay). Among children younger than 5 years old, the risk for severe complications from flu is highest among children younger than 2 years old.

☼ What should I do if I have children or staff sick with the flu?

Move children and staff who become sick at the child care facility to a separate, supervised, space which separates them from others by at least 6 feet until they can be sent home. Limit the number of staff who take care of the sick person and provide a surgical mask to sick staff members to wear if they can tolerate it. Child care facility directors should make appropriate staffing changes (e.g. substitutions) and contact their regional licensing office with these changes. Those who are at higher risk for complications from the flu should consult their health care provider about possibly taking post-exposure antivirals to prevent illness.

☼ How long should children and staff with flu-like illness be excluded from the child care facility?

Children and caregivers with flu-like illness should be excluded for at least 24 hours after they are fever free without the use of fever-reducing medicines. Child care programs, parents or state and local health officials may elect to require longer periods of exclusion.

☼ When should I close my facility for flu-related illness?

If you do not have enough staff or attendees to operate your facility, your local health department may recommend closing your facility.

☼ Should I clean my facility if children or staff have flu or flu-like illness?

Flu viruses may be spread when people touch droplets left by coughs and sneezes on hard surfaces (such as doorknobs or tables) or objects (such as toys or markers) and then touches his or her mouth or nose. However, it is not necessary to disinfect these surfaces beyond routine cleaning using household disinfectants or cleaners approved for use in child care settings.

For more information visit www.flu.maryland.gov or call 1-877-MDFLU4U



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