

# Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family from the Flu this School Year

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
3. **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

If flu conditions become MORE severe, parents should consider the following steps:

- ▶ **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have completely gone away.
- ▶ **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home for 5 days** from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.

Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:

- ▶ Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed.
- ▶ Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
- ▶ Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age and those children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.
- ▶ Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.
- ▶ Update emergency contact lists.
- ▶ Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if schools are dismissed or your child is sick and must stay home.
- ▶ Talk to your school administrators about their pandemic or emergency plan.

**For more information:**

- ▶ **Visit:** [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)
- ▶ **Contact CDC 24 Hours/Every Day**
- ▶ 1 (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636)
- ▶ TTY: (888) 232-6348
- ▶ [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)