

2009 H1N1 Flu and Seasonal Flu

Child care programs must be ready for, and know how to respond to, the H1N1 flu and seasonal flu. It could infect anyone in the program at any time and spread quickly to others. Child care programs can help protect the health of the children and families they serve by preventing the spread of the flu.

Preparing for H1N1 flu

- ✱ **Learn about H1N1** and stay up-to-date on the latest information and advice to follow.

Visit the follow websites:



- [NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center](#) website links to flu resources useful for child care programs

- www.flu.gov – devoted to information about the flu

- ✱ **Develop a plan** for responding to the flu. Include the following topics:

- How to cover key positions when staff members have the flu
- How staff and parents will be informed about the flu
- How long to stay home with the flu
- How to protect staff and children at higher risk for complications from the flu

A child care health consultant (CCHC) can help develop the plan. Give staff and parents a copy of the plan.

- ✱ Review the facility's **Policy for Exclusion** from Child Care Due to Illness. Provide staff and families with a copy of the policy. Children and staff with flu symptoms should stay home until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours.

- ✱ **Encourage vaccinations** for seasonal and H1N1 flu for women who are pregnant, people 6 months to 24 years of age, staff working with children younger than 6 months of age, and staff 25-64 years of age with health conditions that put them at higher risk of medical complications from the flu.



- ✱ Maintain high standards of **handwashing**.

- ✱ Maintain high standards of **respiratory hygiene**: staff and children should cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow. Wash hands after discarding the tissue.

- ✱ Maintain high standards when **cleaning and disinfecting** the environment. Flu viruses on surfaces can infect people for as long as 8 hours after they were deposited on the surfaces.

- ✱ Provide **plenty of outdoor time** and keep indoor rooms well ventilated.

- ✱ Support healthy habits: serve nutritious food, offer drinking water and keep the environment relatively stress-free.

frequently,

- ✱ Encourage children to **spread out** during group activities. Limit the number of children in each center.

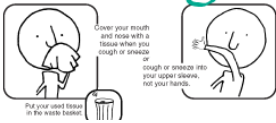
- ✱ Make sure **emergency contact information** is up-to-date for each child.

- ✱ Perform a **daily health check** on all children and staff. **Separate sick children and staff** and send them home as quickly as possible.

- ✱ Encourage parents to make **arrangements for alternate care** if the facility must close.

- ✱ Know who to **contact at the local health department** if assistance is needed.

Cover your Cough



Responding to H1N1 flu and seasonal flu

- **Separate children and staff** who have flu symptoms and **send them home** for the recommended period of time. Recommend they contact their health care provider.
- **Notify parents** that someone in the facility has the flu. Provide them with information about what they can do to protect their family and community from exposure to the flu.
- **Contact a child care health consultant or the local health department for advice**, especially if more than one or two people in the facility have the flu.
- **Close the facility temporarily** in the following circumstances:
 - A large number of children and staff are absent.
 - Many people are sent home each day due to flu symptoms.
 - It is too difficult to operate the program safely.
 - CDC or the local health department recommends closing.
- **Inform the local DCD licensing consultant** of the temporary closing.
- Work closely with the local health department to **assess when to reopen the facility**. Typically, an early childhood program is closed for 5-7 calendar days before it is okay for them to reopen.
- **Inform parents and the local DCD licensing consultant** that the facility is reopening.



Is it an Allergy? A Cold? Or the Flu?

Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Is it a Cold or the Flu?* Federal Occupational Health

Symptoms	Allergy	Cold	Flu
Fever	No	No	✓ Above 100°F
Generalized Aches	No	No	✓ Often severe
Fatigue(tiredness) or weakness	Sometimes	Sometimes	✓ Often severe
Congestion or runny nose	✓	✓	Sometimes
Sneezing	✓	✓	Sometimes
Sore throat	No	✓	✓
Cough	Sometimes	✓	✓ Often severe
Itchy/watery eyes	✓	No	No
Diarrhea or vomiting	No	No	Sometimes, with H1N1 flu

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *CDC Guidance on Helping Child Care and Early Childhood Programs Respond to Influenza during the 2009–2010 Influenza Season*. Retrieved on Sept. 4, 2009 www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childcare/guidance.htm.