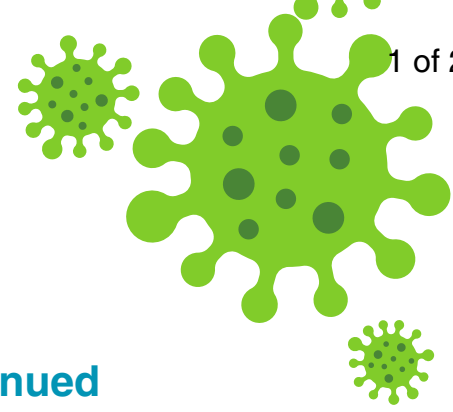


# Influenza



## A Guide for Parents

Influenza (flu) is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. They can infect the nose, throat, and sometimes lungs. Flu is more dangerous than the common cold for children.

### What parents should know:

#### How serious is flu?

Flu illness is more dangerous than the common cold for children. Each year, millions of children get sick with seasonal flu and thousands of children are hospitalized. Children commonly need medical care because of flu, especially children younger than 5 years old.

Complications from flu among children in this age group can include:

- Pneumonia: an illness where the lungs get infected and inflamed,
- Dehydration: when a child's body loses too much water and salts, often because fluid losses are greater than from fluid intake),
- Worsening of long-term medical problems, like heart disease or asthma,
- Brain dysfunction such as encephalopathy, or
- Sinus problems and ear infections.

In rare cases, flu complications can lead to death.

#### How does flu spread?

Flu spreads by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby.

#### Flu spread continued

Less often, someone can get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu viruses on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

While not at higher risk, children 5 years and older can spread flu to their high-risk family members, like infants younger than 6 months old, adults who are 65 years and older, or people, of any age who have certain chronic health conditions.

#### How long can a sick person spread flu to others?

People with flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to up to 5 to 7 days after. Severely ill people or young children may be able to spread flu longer, especially if they still have symptoms.

#### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of flu usually come on suddenly and can include:

- Fever,
- Cough,
- Sore throat,
- Runny or stuffy nose,
- Muscle or body aches,
- Headache,
- Feeling tired, and
- Throwing up, or diarrhea.



Scan here to learn more about flu vaccination on the [sdiz.org](https://sdiz.org) website.



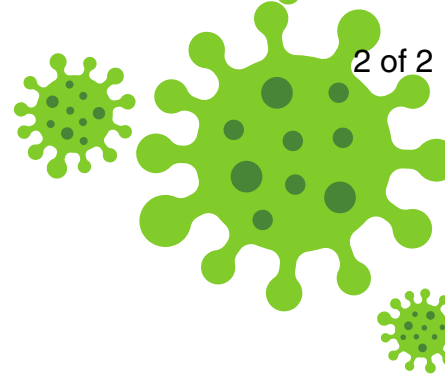
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**CALL: 1 (866) 358-2966 OPTION 5  
EMAIL: PHS-IZPHN.HHSA@SDCOUNTY.CA.GOV**



# Influenza

## A Guide for Parents



### Treatment

#### What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness. Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is 5 years or older and does not have a long-term health problem and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

#### Is there a medicine to treat flu?

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat flu illness. They can shorten your child's illness and make it milder, and they can prevent serious complications. Antivirals work best when started during the first 2 days of illness.

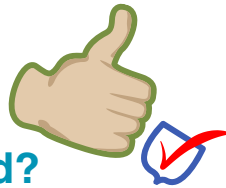
#### When can my child go back to school after having flu?

Keep your child at home from school, day care, or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.

### Prevention

#### How can I protect my child?

The best way to prevent flu and complications caused by flu is by getting a seasonal flu vaccine. In children, a seasonal flu vaccination has been shown to:



- Reduce flu illnesses, doctor's visits for flu, and missed school days.
- Reduce the risk of flu-related hospitalization and death.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends flu vaccination for everyone 6 months and older every year.

- Vaccine options include flu shots that are given as an injection or nasal spray.
- Vaccination is especially important for certain people who are higher risk of developing serious flu complications or who are in close contact with people at higher risk. This includes children at high risk of developing serious complications from flu illness and adults who are close contacts of those children.



In addition to getting a seasonal flu vaccine, children and caregivers should take the same everyday preventive actions the CDC recommends for everyone, including:

- Keeping them away from sick people and children,
- Reminding them to cover their coughs and sneezes,
- Washing their hands with soap and water often, and
- Cleaning surfaces and toys that may be covered with flu viruses.

#### Are the vaccines safe?

Flu vaccines are safe and effective. Hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines over the past 50 years, and there has been extensive research supporting the safety of flu vaccines.



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