

**What should childcare centers do to identify illnesses potentially due to influenza in a child and reduce spread to others?**

1. Childcare officials should be aware of the symptoms of influenza. Influenza symptoms include fever ( $\geq 100^{\circ}$  F or  $37.8^{\circ}$  C), cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. In addition to these influenza-like illness symptoms, persons with swine-origin influenza A H1N1 may experience diarrhea and vomiting.
2. Childcare employees should be alert for symptoms of influenza-like illness among children and follow established childcare policies for reporting children with symptoms of illness to the appropriate daycare official and exclude children with symptoms of illness from the childcare center while additional information is gathered.
3. If a child is experiencing a fever and additional symptoms of a respiratory illness such as a cough or sore throat, the designated childcare official should contact a parent (or legal guardian) of the child and inform them the child should be sent home from the childcare center to prevent spread to other individuals. The child should be isolated from other individuals until the parent can make arrangements to send the child home.
4. Identify a location for a sick room to isolate children with influenza symptoms until the child can be sent home. The room should be away from common rooms or areas which other children in the childcare center frequent.
5. Designate a limited number of staff to care for ill persons until they can be sent home. Designated staff should not be at increased risk of influenza (i.e., pregnant individuals).
6. Childcare officials should speak with the parent (or legal guardian) to inform them the child is to be excluded from daycare and extracurricular activities such as field trips until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications, even if the child is taking an antiviral medication.

**What should be done to prevent or reduce the spread of influenza in childcare settings?**

- \* **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands several times a day using soap and warm water for 15-20 seconds. Restrooms should be checked regularly to ensure that soap and paper towels are always available. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- \* **Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.** Alcohol-based hand gels may be used in classrooms to minimize disruption. Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is effective in killing germs on hands when they are not visibly soiled. Appropriate times to practice good hand hygiene are after coughing, sneezing, or contact with infected surfaces (e.g., desk, doorknob).
- \* **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Make sure tissues are available in all childcare center rooms. Tissues should be thrown away immediately followed by proper hand hygiene. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
- \* **Stay home when ill.** Any employee or child experiencing influenza-like illness symptoms should stay at home or be sent home until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications, even if the individual is taking an antiviral medication.
- \* **Clean surfaces frequently.** In the childcare center, clean commonly used surfaces such as door handles, handrails, eating surfaces, desks, etc., frequently with detergent-based cleaners or EPA registered disinfectants that are normally used in the childcare setting. These products should be used according to directions on the product label. For bleach solutions, mix 1/4 cup chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of cool water. These solutions should be changed daily. Additional, extensive cleaning by wiping down floors and walls is not necessary as it is unknown whether this would be helpful in decreasing the spread of influenza.
- \* **Don't forget about the childcare bus.** If possible, disinfect commonly handled interior surfaces (i.e., door handles, hand rails, etc.) between each use. Consider making tissues and alcohol-based hand gel available on buses since hand washing facilities are not available.
- \* **Report high absentee rates to your local health department.**

