



## Prevent the Flu: Tips for Parents & Child Care Providers

We can't stop every illness at child care. But the good news is that parents and child care providers can help slow the spread of the flu (</english/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/default.aspx>) (influenza).

Flu infections are highly contagious. The respiratory illness is caused by a virus. It spreads easily when children are in a group with other children such as in a child care center or family child care home.

Flu is more dangerous than the common cold (</English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/caring-for-Your-childs-cold-or-flu.aspx>) for children. It can lead to serious health conditions like pneumonia or bacterial infections. Each year many children are hospitalized and some die from the flu.



**The following resources provide information on preventing the flu. Materials and tools for child care facilities also are included.**

### Flu vaccine

The flu vaccine (</English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/which-flu-vaccine-should-my-child-get-this-year.aspx>) is the best way to protect against getting the flu. Everyone age 6 months and older need a flu vaccine each year. Babies cannot get their first flu shot until they are 6 months old (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/infantcare.htm#younger>).

It is critical that people who live with or care for children—especially newborns and infants younger than 6 months—get vaccinated. Immunizing adults and children who are around an infant to prevent illnesses is often referred to as "cocooning."

- Which Flu Vaccine Should Children Get? (</English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/which-flu-vaccine-should-my-child-get-this-year.aspx>)
- 10 Simple Steps to Prevent Infections During Pregnancy (</English/ages-stages/prenatal/Pages/Simple-Steps-to-Prevent-Infections-During-Pregnancy.aspx>)

### Protect kids with chronic health conditions

Children and teens with chronic health conditions, such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system, are at high risk for flu complications.

- Flu: A Guide for Parents of Children and Adolescents with Chronic Health Conditions (</English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/Pages/Flu-A-Guide-for-Parents-of-Children-or-Adolescents-With-Chronic-Health-Conditions.aspx>)

### Fight germs

Taking the time to wash hands and clean and disinfect surfaces goes a long way toward keeping germs away. As adults, we know to wash our hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing, sneezing or wiping noses. When you cough or sneeze, cough into your sleeve or arm or into a tissue. Be sure to dispose of the tissue and wash your hands. Parents and child care providers can do their part to stop germs by teaching and reminding young children how and when to wash their hands.

and Washing: A Powerful Antidote to Illness (</English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Hand-Washing-A-Powerful-Antidote-to-Illness.aspx>)

- [Germ Prevention Strategies \(/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Germ-Prevention-Strategies.aspx\)](/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Germ-Prevention-Strategies.aspx) [Back to Top](#)
- [Cleaners, Sanitizers & Disinfectants \(/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Cleaners-Sanitizers-Disinfectants.aspx\)](/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Cleaners-Sanitizers-Disinfectants.aspx)

## Prevent the spread of illness in child care

Young children who have just entered child care are more vulnerable to infectious diseases. This is because it may be the first time they have been exposed to certain germs. In addition, they may be too young to have received enough doses of recommended vaccines (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Recommended-Immunization-Schedules.aspx>) to have developed immunity.

Caregivers and teachers can do their part by supporting ways to avoid the spread of infections in child care and keep community immunity strong.

- [These Simple Steps Help Children in Child Care Stay Safe and Healthy During the Flu Season \(/English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/take-simple-steps-to-avoid-dreaded-spread-of-flu-in-child-care.aspx\)](/English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/take-simple-steps-to-avoid-dreaded-spread-of-flu-in-child-care.aspx)
- [Early Education and Child Care Influenza Resources \(https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/influenza/early-education-and-child-care-influenza-resources/\)](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/influenza/early-education-and-child-care-influenza-resources/)

## How sick is too sick?

When children are healthy, they can go to child care or school, and parents can go to work. Getting the flu vaccine is the best way to make sure everyone can continue to participate in these important activities.

You'll know if your child needs to stay home. They may feel too sick to participate in activities. Or, they require care beyond what the caregivers can provide and it takes away from their ability to care for the other children.

- [When to Keep Your Child Home from Child Care \(/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/When-to-Keep-Your-Child-Home-from-Child-Care.aspx\)](/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/When-to-Keep-Your-Child-Home-from-Child-Care.aspx)
- [Caring for Your Child's Cold or Flu \(/English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/caring-for-Your-childs-cold-or-flu.aspx\)](/English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/caring-for-Your-childs-cold-or-flu.aspx)

## More resources

- [Which Flu Vaccine Should My Children Get This Year \(/English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/which-flu-vaccine-should-my-child-get-this-year.aspx\)?](/English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/which-flu-vaccine-should-my-child-get-this-year.aspx)
- *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools*, 6th Edition (<https://shop.aap.org/managing-infectious-diseases-in-child-care-and-schools-6th-edition-paperback/>) (pre-order; available March 1, 2023)
- [Flu.gov \(http://www.flu.gov/\)](http://www.flu.gov/) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [FamiliesFightingFlu.org \(http://www.familiesfightingflu.org/\)](http://www.familiesfightingflu.org/)

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