

Flu Facts *for teachers*

The flu is contagious! Symptoms start 1-4 days after the virus enters the body. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Most adults may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick. Children may pass the virus for longer than 7 days. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons may still spread the virus to others.



Washing hands with soap and water (for as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice) will help protect against many germs, especially after you cough or sneeze. Proper hand washing should be promoted before meals, after recess or physical education, and at other appropriate times. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.

What are some of the ways I can protect children in my classroom against the flu?

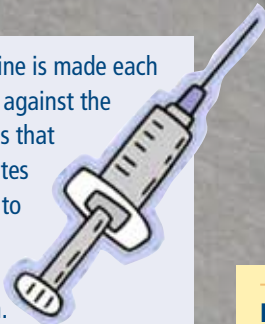
Take – and encourage your children to take – everyday steps that can help prevent the spread of germs. This includes:

- If you are sick, stay home. Children and teachers should stay home from school for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash hands often and carefully with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- If someone in the classroom is sick, try to keep the sick person separate from others, if possible.
- Keep surfaces such as desk tops, doorknobs, sinks, countertops and toys for children clean by wiping them down with a disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

The Centers for Disease Control and the New York State Health Department advise that a yearly flu vaccine is always the best way to specifically prevent the flu. School staff and students' families should discuss this option with their family physician.


 Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
 National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD)
 Learn more at www.cdc.gov/flu

A new flu vaccine is made each year to protect against the three flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the next flu season.



Flu vaccines are made using strict safety and production measures, and have been given to millions in the U.S. with a very good safety record.

Is there a medicine to treat the flu?

Antiviral drugs can treat flu illness. They can make people feel better and get better sooner and may prevent serious flu complications, like pneumonia for example, that can lead to hospitalization and even death. These drugs are different from antibiotics, but they also need to be prescribed by a doctor. They work best when started during the first 2 days of illness, especially for people who are at greater risk of having serious flu complications. These drugs can be given to children and pregnant women. Talk with your family doctor about appropriate flu medicine for your family.