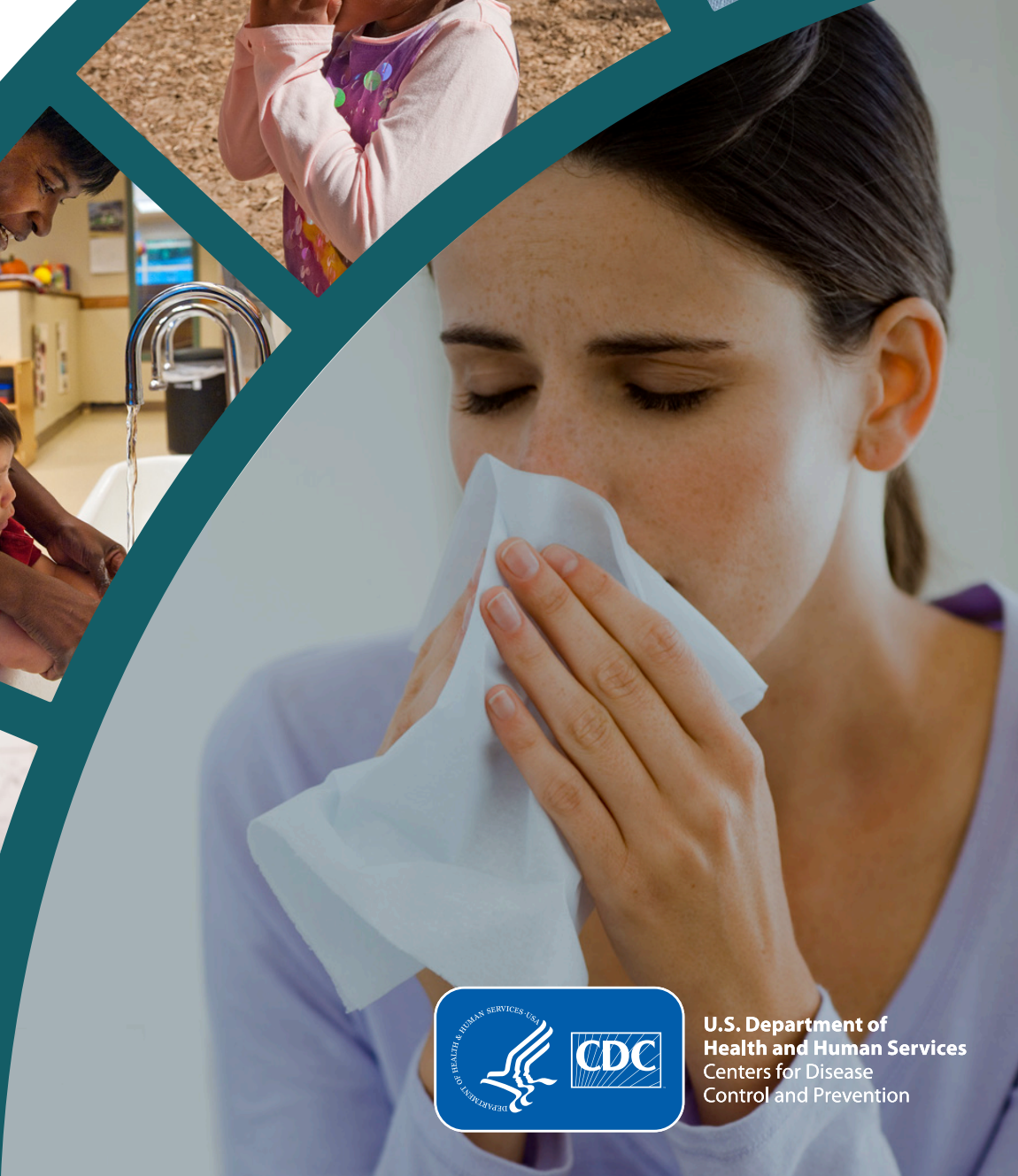


Get Your Household Ready for Pandemic Flu

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Audience: Household members responsible for planning for a flu pandemic.

Purpose: This guide provides information about **nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs)** and their use during a flu pandemic. NPIs are actions, apart from getting vaccinated and taking antiviral medications, that people and communities can take to help slow the spread of respiratory illnesses like pandemic flu. Use this guide to develop an emergency plan that reflects considerations specific to you and your household.

ICON LEGEND



Tips



Readiness Resources



Questions

Keep Yourself and Members of Your Household Healthy By Planning For Pandemic Flu

Influenza can spread quickly from sick people to others who are nearby at home, school, work, and public events. Seasonal influenza, also known as “the flu,” is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs (see **flu symptoms and complications**). Flu mostly spreads by droplets containing flu viruses traveling through the air (up to 6 feet) when a sick person coughs or sneezes. Less often, people also might get flu by touching surfaces or objects with flu viruses on them and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine. CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors’ visits, and missed work and school due to flu illness, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. CDC also recommends that people practice *everyday preventive actions* (or personal NPIs) at all times to protect themselves and their loved ones from flu and other respiratory infections (see Page 4).

Millions of people in the United States get sick with the flu each year, and thousands of people are hospitalized; these numbers may increase during a flu pandemic. Flu pandemics are much less common but can occur at any time. Do not let your household be caught by surprise! Just as you prepare for seasonal flu, you should prepare for pandemic flu. Create an emergency plan to prepare your household for a flu pandemic. Taking action now can help protect you and the health of those you care about.

Pandemic flu is not seasonal flu.

A flu pandemic occurs when a new flu virus that is different from seasonal flu viruses emerges and spreads quickly between people, causing illness worldwide. Most people will lack immunity to the pandemic flu virus. Pandemic flu can be more severe, causing more deaths than seasonal flu. Because it is a new virus, a vaccine may not be available right away. A pandemic could therefore overwhelm normal operations in schools, workplaces, and other community settings. Read more about the important **differences between seasonal flu and pandemic flu**.

NPIs can help slow the spread of flu

When a new flu virus emerges, it can take up to 6 months before a **pandemic flu vaccine** is widely available. When a vaccine is not available, NPIs are the best way to help slow the spread of flu. They include personal, community, and environmental actions. These actions are most effective when used together.

You play a key role in flu readiness. Safeguard your health and the health of your household members by making a pandemic flu plan now.





Personal NPIs are *everyday preventive actions* that can help keep people from getting and spreading flu. These actions include staying home when you are sick, covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and washing your hands often with soap and water.



Community NPIs are strategies organizations and community leaders can use to help limit face-to-face contact. These strategies may include making sick-leave policies more flexible in workplace settings, temporarily dismissing schools, avoiding close contact with others, and canceling large public events.



Environmental NPIs are surface cleaning measures that remove germs from frequently touched surfaces and objects.



CDC has created resources to help you plan for a flu pandemic.

Visit www.cdc.gov/npi for the latest information and resources about nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs).



CDC Video: Do Your Part to Stop the Spread of Flu at Home

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9APKBBR18Cc>

Take Action to Help Slow the Spread of Flu and Illness

CDC has developed recommended actions for preventing the spread of flu in household settings. Practice *everyday preventive actions* at all times. Plan for additional community NPI actions that may be recommended by public health officials, if a flu pandemic occurs. The **Before**, **During**, and **After** sections of this guide offer suggested strategies to help you plan for and implement these recommendations.

EVERYDAY PREVENTIVE ACTIONS

Everyone should always practice good personal health habits to help prevent flu.



Stay home when you are sick. Stay home for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines.



Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use at least a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.



Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.

NPIs RESERVED FOR A FLU PANDEMIC

*Everyone should be prepared to take these additional actions, if recommended by public health officials.**

For everyone:



Avoid close contact with others. Keep a distance of at least 3 feet.



Stay home if someone in your house is sick.

For sick persons:



Create a separate room for sick household members.



Use a facemask, at home or out in public.



Avoid sharing personal items.



Postpone or cancel your attendance at large events.

*These additional actions might be recommended for severe, very severe, or extreme flu pandemics.





What are the symptoms of flu?

Fever*

Cough

Sore throat

Runny or stuffy nose

Body aches

Headache

Chills

Fatigue

Sometimes vomiting and diarrhea

*Signs of fever include chills, feeling very warm, flushed appearance, or sweating.



When should you seek emergency care?



Emergency symptoms for **CHILDREN**.*

Fast breathing or trouble breathing

Bluish skin color

Not drinking enough fluids

Not waking up or not interacting

Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held

Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with a fever and a worse cough

Fever with a rash

*Additional emergency signs for infants include being unable to eat, no tears when crying, and significantly fewer wet diapers than normal.



Emergency symptoms for **ADULTS**:

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen

Sudden dizziness

Confusion

Severe or persistent vomiting

Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with a fever and a worse cough



Good health habits start at home.

Teach children to correctly practice good personal health habits at all times. Young children may need your help doing this! Tell them about the importance of not sharing personal items, such as water bottles, lip gloss, or food.



CDC Fact Sheet: Do Your Part to Slow the Spread of Flu

<http://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/communication/pdf/do-your-part-slow-spread-flu-factsheet.pdf>

Note: The following sections include CDC's recommended actions for preventing the spread of pandemic flu and suggested strategies for implementing these recommendations.

Before a Flu Pandemic Occurs: Plan

Did you know that school dismissals may happen if a flu pandemic occurs?



A flu pandemic can last for several months. Public health officials may recommend community actions based on the severity of the pandemic that limit exposure, such as temporarily dismissing schools early in a pandemic. Dismissing schools can help slow the spread of disease before pandemic flu becomes widespread in the community. School authorities also may decide to dismiss schools if too many students or staff are absent. School dismissals and other NPI recommendations may be challenging to plan for and implement in your household. However, you may be asked to follow such recommendations for the safety and well-being for your household members.

Developing a household plan for pandemic flu will help ensure flu readiness. The details of your plan should be based on the needs and daily routine of your household, including alternative arrangements for child, elder, and pet care.

Create an emergency plan of action for pandemic flu

- ✓ **Talk with the people who need to be included in your plan.** Meet with household members, other relatives, and friends to discuss what should be done if a flu pandemic occurs and what the needs of each person will be. Visit [Emergency Preparedness and You](#) to learn more about preparing your household for an emergency.
- ✓ **Plan ways to care for those at greater risk for serious complications.** Certain people are at greater risk for serious complications if they get the flu, including during a flu pandemic. Flu can worsen their health conditions, and services they rely on may not be available. CDC will recommend actions to help keep people who are at high risk for flu complications healthy if a pandemic occurs.
- ✓ **Get to know your neighbors.** Talk with them about pandemic flu and emergency planning. If your neighborhood has a website or social media page, consider joining it to stay connected to neighbors, information, and resources.
- ✓ **Identify organizations in your community that can offer assistance.** Create a list of community- and faith-based organizations that you and your household can contact in the event you lack access to information, health care services, support, and resources. Consider including organizations that provide mental health or counseling services, food, and other supplies.
- ✓ **Create an emergency contact list.** Ensure that your household has a current list of emergency contacts for family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, health care providers, teachers, employers, the local public health department, and other community resources.

Practice good personal health habits and plan for home-based actions to prevent spreading flu

- ✓ **Practice and teach everyday preventive actions now** (see Page 5). Get yourself and your household members in the routine of practicing *everyday preventive actions* to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like flu. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Practicing other good health habits, such as getting plenty of rest, exercising, drinking plenty of fluids, eating healthy foods, and managing stress, also can help stop the spread of germs and prevent the flu. **Read more about everyday preventive actions.** View the **Do Your Part to Slow the Spread of Flu at Home** video to learn more.
- ✓ **Plan to have extra supplies of important items on hand.** For example, keep on hand extra supplies like soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, tissues, and disposable facemasks. If you or your household members have a chronic condition and regularly take prescription drugs, talk to your health care provider, pharmacist, and insurance provider

about keeping an emergency supply of medications at home. These supplies can always be used for a different emergency and then restocked.

Read more about preparing your household for pandemic flu.

Note: Keep hand sanitizer out of reach of small children. Consumption of alcohol-based hand sanitizer can lead to alcohol poisoning. Small children should only use alcohol-based hand sanitizer under adult supervision.

- ✓ **Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy.** If possible, also choose a bathroom for the sick person to use. Plan to clean these rooms daily. **Learn how to care for someone at home and how to clean a flu patient's room.**





Be prepared for your child's school or child care facility to be temporarily dismissed

- ✓ **Learn about the emergency operations plan at your child's school or child care facility.** During a flu pandemic, local public health officials may recommend schools be dismissed temporarily to help slow the spread of flu. School authorities also may decide to dismiss school if too many students or staff are absent. Understand the local School Board's plan for continuing education and social services during school dismissals, such as student meal programs. If your child attends a college or university, encourage your child to learn about the school's plan for pandemic flu.
- ✓ **Plan alternative child care arrangements for children.** Determine how your children will be cared for should schools be dismissed during a flu pandemic.

Plan for changes at your workplace

- ✓ **Learn about your employer's emergency operations plan.** Discuss sick-leave policies and telework options for sick workers or those needing to stay home to care for a sick household member. Join the emergency planning team at your workplace (if possible).



Get involved and volunteer with community-wide flu preparedness activities.

Learn more about how you can get involved in community-wide disaster planning at www.ready.gov/get-involved



Pandemic Flu Checklist for Individuals and Families

http://cchealth.org/pandemic-flu/pdf/individuals_and_families_checklist.pdf

During a Flu Pandemic: Take Action

Did you know that people may be able to spread the flu to others before knowing they are sick as well as while they are sick?

Knowing when someone is sick with flu is not always easy. Adults may be able to spread flu to other people beginning 1 day **before** symptoms occur and up to 5–7 days **after** becoming sick. Children can spread flu for longer than 7 days. Flu symptoms start 1–4 days after the virus enters the body. That means 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. Some people can be infected with the flu virus, but have no symptoms at all. During this time, they may still spread the virus to others. During a pandemic, you can take action to protect yourself and others by:

- ✓ Staying home when you are sick with flu symptoms.
- ✓ Keeping away from others who are sick.
- ✓ Limiting face-to-face contact with others (as much as possible).

If you or your household members are at high risk for flu complications, please consult with your health care provider for more information. Early action to stop the spread of flu will help keep you and your household members healthy.



Put your emergency plan into action

- ✓ **Stay informed about the local flu situation.** Get up-to-date information about local flu activity from public health officials. An early sign that you may need to take steps to protect your family is increased flu-related absenteeism at your child's school. Be aware of temporary school dismissals in your area, as this may affect your family's daily routine.
- ✓ **Avoid close contact with others.** Flu viruses can travel through the air up to 6 feet. During a pandemic, public health officials may recommend that people keep a distance of at least 3 feet to help slow the spread of flu. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- ✓ **Stay home if you become sick.** Even if you do not have a fever, stay home if you have flu symptoms (see Page 6). If you have a fever, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen. When seeking medical care or other necessities, wear a facemask and keep your distance from others as much as possible. Seek emergency care if flu symptoms become severe. Public health officials also may recommend that you stay home for at least 3 days, if a member of your household is sick, to avoid spreading the flu to others.
- ✓ **Continue practicing everyday preventive actions** (see Page 5). Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid sharing personal items like food, drinks, or lip gloss. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects with regular soap and water or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved products. Always follow product labels when using disinfectants.

- ✓ **Use the separate room and bathroom you prepared for sick household members.** Provide sick household members with clean disposable facemasks to wear at home. Clean the sick room and bathroom daily. Use soap and water, a bleach-and-water solution, or EPA-approved household products. **Read more about caring for those sick with flu.**
- ✓ **Stay in touch with others by phone or email.** If you live alone and become sick during a flu pandemic, you may need to ask for help. If you have a chronic disease condition and live alone, ask your friends, family, and health care providers to check on you during a pandemic.

Inform your workplace about changes in your schedule

- ✓ **Notify your workplace as soon as possible if your schedule changes.** Ask to work from home or take leave if you or someone in your household gets sick with flu symptoms, or if your child's school is temporarily dismissed.



Manage your children's activities during a pandemic

- ✓ **Notify your children's child care facility or school if they are sick with flu.** Talk with their teachers about classroom assignments and activities they can do from home.
- ✓ **Keep track of school dismissals in your community.** Read or watch media sources that report school dismissals. Stay in close contact with children who are at a college or university, and be aware of what steps their schools are taking to protect students. If schools are temporarily dismissed, use alternative child care arrangements.
- ✓ **Keep routines at home as normal as possible.** If schools are dismissed, try to keep children busy with activities and exercises at home. Keep educational materials, such as books and videos, on hand. Ensure that children keep up with school work. Watch your children's health closely. If your children are in the care of someone else, urge caregivers to watch for flu-like symptoms.
- ✓ **Discourage children and teens from gathering in other public places while school is dismissed.** If they must be in groups for childcare or other reasons, keep them in small groups of 6 or fewer. Make sure groups consist of the same children each day. If children show flu-like symptoms, separate them from others immediately.

Make smart decisions about attending large events

- ✓ **Decide whether to attend large events.** Public health officials may recommend postponing or canceling large events, such as sporting events, conferences, worship services, and other community events. Stay up-to-date about event cancellations before you leave home. Find out if there are other ways to enjoy the event without leaving home, such as watching it on TV or online.
- ✓ **Know your risk for getting and spreading the flu at the event.** Stay home if you do not feel well or are more likely to get very sick with the flu. The number of people that will be attending, their ages, and where the event will be located can affect your risk for getting sick.
- ✓ **If you decide to attend a public event, practice good health habits.** Try to keep at least 3 feet of distance between you and others at the event. Avoid close contact, such as shaking hands, hugging, and kissing, with other people. Wash hands often, or use at least a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. Avoid surfaces that are touched often, such as doorknobs and handrails.



Stay connected on social media.

Many public health departments will use social media, like Facebook and Twitter, to communicate timely and accurate pandemic flu information to the public.



The CDC's Pandemic Influenza Storybook

Learn about the impact pandemic flu events have had on both survivors and the families and friends of non-survivors: <http://www.cdc.gov/publications/panflu/index.html>

After a Flu Pandemic Has Ended: Follow Up

Did you know that most people have never heard of pandemic flu or the term NPIs?

Remember, a flu pandemic can last for several months. The impact on individuals, households, and communities can be great. When public health officials determine the pandemic has ended in your community, take time to improve your household's emergency plan. As public health officials continue to plan for pandemic flu, you and your household also have a responsibility. Your ongoing commitment to pandemic flu planning will be the key to successfully preventing the spread of flu during a pandemic.

Evaluate the effectiveness your emergency plan of action

- ✓ **Discuss and note lessons learned.** Were your flu-prevention actions effective at home, school, work, and public gatherings? Talk about problems found in your plan and effective solutions. Identify additional resources for you and your household. Review your plan each year before school begins and replenish necessary supplies.
- ✓ **Continue to practice everyday preventive actions.**
- ✓ **Start community discussions about emergency planning.** Be creative and tell your story on social media, blogs, discussion boards, and community meetings. Let others know about the flu-readiness actions that worked for you and your household. Promote the importance of practicing good personal health habits.

Congratulations on planning for a flu pandemic

A flu pandemic can occur at any time, and having a plan in place is very important. Your emergency plan will help you and members of your household respond more quickly and effectively when an actual emergency occurs.



Be ready for any type of emergency.

Your preparedness efforts should not end with the flu. Review and update your plan to include action steps you and your household can take during other emergencies and natural disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornados.



Visit America's PrepareAthon

Learn which disasters could happen in your community and what to do to keep safe. Help people in your community prepare for flu and other emergencies: <https://community.fema.gov/>



Questions?

Help and planning resources are just a click away. Visit www.cdc.gov/npi and www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic

Readiness Resources

Pandemic Flu Planning Resources

CDC Pandemic Flu Planning Tools and Resources

- Visit www.cdc.gov/npi for the latest information and resources about nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs)
- Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm> for the latest information and resources about pandemic flu
- Learn who may be at high risk for flu complications http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm
- Visit Community Mitigation Guidelines to Prevent Pandemic Influenza—United States, 2017 <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr6601a1> to learn more about planning for pandemic flu.

CDC Pandemic Flu NPI Planning Guides

- Get Ready for Pandemic Flu: Educational Settings <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/pdf/gr-pan-flu-ed-set.pdf>
- Get Ready for Pandemic Flu: Workplace Settings <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/pdf/gr-pan-flu-work-set.pdf>
- Get Ready for Pandemic Flu: Event Planners <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/pdf/gr-pan-flu-event-plan.pdf>
- Get Ready for Pandemic Flu: Community- and Faith-Based Organizations Serving Vulnerable Populations <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/pdf/gr-pan-flu-com-faith-org-serv-vul-pop.pdf>
- Get Ready for Pandemic Flu: Health Communicators <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/pdf/gr-pan-flu-health-com.pdf>

CDC Storybook

- Pandemic Influenza Storybook <http://www.cdc.gov/publications/panflu/index.html>

Additional Planning Information

- Pandemic Flu Checklist for Individuals and Families http://cchealth.org/pandemic-flu/pdf/individuals_and_families_checklist.pdf
- It's Not Flu As Usual <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/flu/brochures/FluBrochureFamily.pdf>
- Pandemic Influenza Readiness <http://www.ready.gov/pandemic>
- Get Ready Kid's Guide for Pandemic Flu <http://www.getreadyforflu.org/KidsFlu.pdf>

Connecting with Public Health Agencies

- Connect to city and county public health officials for local information <http://www.naccho.org/about/LHD/index.cfm>
- Connect to state and territorial public health officials for statewide information <http://www.astho.org/Directory/>

Seasonal Flu Planning Resources

CDC Seasonal Flu Information

- Visit www.cdc.gov/flu for the latest information and resources about seasonal flu
- Summary of Weekly Flu View <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/summary.htm>
- Treating Influenza <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/treating-influenza.pdf>
- Protecting Against Influenza (Flu): Advice for Caregivers of Young Children <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/infantcare.htm>
- Handwashing: A Family Activity Keeping Kids & Adults Healthy <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/hygiene/hwfamily.pdf>
- Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>
- Pregnant Women & Influenza (Flu) <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/pregnant.htm>

CDC Guides

- The Flu: A Guide for Parents https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/fluguideforparents_trifold.pdf

CDC Videos

- Do Your Part to Stop the Spread of Seasonal Flu at Childcare Facilities and Schools <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8msgeGjI3xU&feature=youtu.be>
- Do Your Part to Stop the Spread of Seasonal Flu at Colleges and Universities <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fca1g1N2T5E&feature=youtu.be>
- Do Your Part to Stop the Spread of Seasonal Flu at Home <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9APKBBR18Cc&feature=youtu.be>

CDC Fact Sheets

- CDC Fact Sheet: Do Your Part to Slow the Spread of Flu <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/communication/pdf/do-your-part-slow-spread-flu-factsheet.pdf>

CDC Questions and Answers

- The Flu: What to Do if You Get Sick www.cdc.gov/flu/takingcare.htm

CDC Podcasts

- Happy Handwashing Song <http://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=770473>
- Deck Yourself with Flu Protection Song <http://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=521843>

CDC E-Cards

- Happy Handwashing Song <http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=462&category=190>

Additional Planning Information

- Flu View Portal <http://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/fluview/fluportaldashboard.html>
- Flu Near You <https://flunearyou.org/>
- Flu: A Guide for Parents of Children or Adolescents with Chronic Health Conditions <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/Pages/Flu-A-Guide-for-Parents-of-Children-or-Adolescents-With-Chronic-Health-Conditions.aspx>
- National Safety Foundation Scrub Club <http://www.scrubclub.org/home.aspx>

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