



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

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PHIL BREDESEN
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA T. LODGE
COMMISSIONER

September 18, 2008

Dear Child Care Provider:

The purpose of this letter is to remind you about a new law, Public Chapter 687, which requires child care providers to disseminate information to parents regarding immunizing their children against influenza (flu). Providers are required to hand out this information to parents of all enrolled children during the months of August and September of each year, beginning this year. The intent of the law is to educate parents regarding the benefits of immunizing children, ages six months to five years, against influenza.

We have included information about influenza immunization on the Child Care Services section of our web site: <http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv>, which you may print and share with parents. Our site has links to a parent guide that is published by the Centers for Disease Control, and we have also enclosed a copy of this helpful form. You can also find the parent guide and up-to-date information on the CDC web site: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/2008-09/parents_guide.htm

The National Association of Child Care Professionals and Families Fighting Flu, Inc. have also partnered to educate parents about the severity of influenza and the importance of immunizing children every year. For more information about their campaign, please encourage parents to visit <http://www.familiesfightingflu.org>. You may also call the National Association of Child Care Professionals to order "Prevent Flu – Get Vaccinated" posters. The toll free number is 1-800-537-1118.

Because this is a law, your Licensing Program Evaluator will be asking you to maintain documentation that you have given this information to parents each year, during the months of August and September. Please have parents sign and date a statement indicating that they have received information regarding influenza immunization. A sample statement can be found on the DHS Flu Information web page

As always, we greatly appreciate the work you do to care for our most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia T. Lodge". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Virginia T. Lodge
Commissioner

VTL:jt

Enclosure

cc: Child Care Licensing Staff



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People.™

Due to the lapse in government funding, only web sites supporting excepted functions will be updated unless otherwise funded. As a result, the information on this website may not be up to date, the transactions submitted via the website may not be processed, and the agency may not be able to respond to inquiries until appropriations are enacted.

Updates regarding government operating status and resumption of normal operations can be found at <http://www.usa.gov>.

Key Facts about Influenza (Flu) & Flu Vaccine

What is influenza (also called flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu **vaccine** each year.

Signs and symptoms of flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

**It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

How flu spreads

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly 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. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

Period of contagiousness

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 healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days **after** becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

How serious is the flu?

Flu is unpredictable and how severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next depending on many things, including:

- what flu viruses are spreading,
- how much flu vaccine is available
- when vaccine is available
- how many people get vaccinated, and
- how well the flu vaccine is matched to flu viruses that are causing illness.

Certain people are at greater risk for serious complications if they get the flu. This includes older people, young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), and persons who live in facilities like nursing homes.

Flu seasons are unpredictable and can be severe. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, estimates of flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people.

Complications of flu

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

Prevent seasonal flu: Get vaccinated

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season.

There are several flu vaccine options for the 2013-2014 flu season.

Traditional flu vaccines made to protect against three different flu viruses (called “trivalent” vaccines) are available. In addition, this season flu vaccines made to protect against four different flu viruses (called “quadrivalent” vaccines) also are available.

The trivalent flu vaccine protects against two influenza A viruses and an influenza B virus. The following trivalent flu vaccines are available:

- Standard dose trivalent shots that are manufactured using virus grown in eggs. These are approved for people ages 6 months and older. There are different brands of this type of vaccine, and each is approved for different ages. However, there is a brand that is approved for children as young as 6 months old and up.
- A standard dose trivalent shot containing virus grown in cell culture, which is approved for people 18 and older.
- A standard dose trivalent shot that is egg-free, approved for people 18 through 49 years of age.
- A high-dose trivalent shot, approved for people 65 and older.
- A standard dose intradermal trivalent shot, which is injected into the skin instead of the muscle and uses a much smaller needle than the regular flu shot, approved for people 18 through 64 years of age.

The quadrivalent flu vaccine protects against two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses. The following quadrivalent flu vaccines are available:

- A standard dose quadrivalent shot
- A standard dose quadrivalent flu

(*“Healthy” indicates persons who do not have an underlying medical condition that predisposes them to