

Dallas Independent School District

Preparing for the Flu



Information for Parents

This presentation provides parents with basic information on the flu and resources to access more information.

What is the flu?

- Flu is a short word for influenza.
- It is a contagious respiratory infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses.
- Many different flu viruses make people sick.

What is the seasonal flu?

Seasonal flu refers to influenza viruses expected during the fall and spring of each year. Each year the seasonal flu vaccines change in anticipation of the expected viruses for that year.

Regular seasonal flu results in an estimated 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations from flu-related causes.

What is Novel H1N1 flu?

- Also called the “swine flu.”
- The term H1N1 refers to the type of virus and Novel means that it is new.
- This new and different influenza virus is spreading worldwide among people.
- It is important to know that humans do not have natural protection from this virus.

How serious is the flu?

- Illness caused by the flu is serious for young children and children with one or more chronic medical conditions.
- Children with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, weakened immune systems, kidney disease, heart problems, neurological and neuromuscular disorders are more susceptible to serious illness from flu.

How does the flu spread?

- Person to person through respiratory droplets
 - Coughing
 - Sneezing
 - Touching a surface or object with flu viruses on it and then touching mouth or nose without washing hands

What are the symptoms of the flu?

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches and headaches
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea and vomiting may also occur

How long can a sick person spread the flu to others?

- One day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days later.
- Children with chronic conditions may be sick for a longer period of time.

How can I protect my child against the flu?

- Get a flu shot as soon as possible.
- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing and coughing or cough and sneeze into the bend of your arm.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth.

How can I protect my child against the flu?

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Use alcohol based hand sanitizers if water is not available.
- Avoid close contact with sick people – social distancing.
- Clean surfaces and items that have frequent hand contact.

What is social distancing?

- Social distancing is increasing the space between people to avoid the spread of the flu.
- Examples of social distancing:
 - Keep sick person in a separate room in the house.
 - Limit contact with sick person as much as possible.
 - Designate a single person to provide care for sick person.

What should I do if my child has flu-like symptoms?

- Keep child at home until he/she no longer has a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines (e.g., Tylenol).
- Consult your physician or clinic for advice.
- Provide your child with plenty of rest and offer more fluids to drink.

Can my child go to school if he/she has flu-like symptoms?

No, your child will need to stay home and rest. Avoid close contact by the sick child with other family members. Contact your physician for advice.

When can my child return to school ?

Students should return to school 24 hours after fever or signs of fever have disappeared and without the use of fever reducing medicine.

Is there a vaccine to protect my child against the flu?

- Seasonal flu vaccine is available. Contact your physician, local clinics, or pharmacies.
- H1N1 vaccine will be available in October or November.

Where can I go to obtain a flu shot?

- Private Physicians
- Dallas County Health and Human Services Department
- Clinics located in the community
- Youth and Family Centers
- Local Pharmacies
- Call 2-1-1 for more information

Is there medicine to treat the flu?

- Tamiflu and Relenza are antiviral drugs to treat both seasonal and H1N1 flu.
- Both medications require a prescription by physician.
- Call your physician for advice.

How should my child wash their hands?

- Work up some lather on both sides of hands, wrists, and between fingers. Don't forget to wash around nails. This is one place germs like to hide. Wash for about 10 to 15 seconds - about how long it takes to sing "Happy Birthday." (Sing it quickly two times or just once if you go nice and slow.)
- Rinse and dry well with a clean towel.

What should I communicate to the school nurse?

- Inform nurse when student will be out of school due to flu-like symptoms.
- Meet with nurse and/or bring a doctor's note when returning to school if student was sent home or absent due to flu-like symptoms or H1N1 flu.

For More Information on the Flu

- Contact Dallas County Health and Human Services Department at 214-819-2009 or at www.dallascounty.org
- For more information contact Texas Department of State Health Services at www.dshs.state.tx.us
- Center for Disease Control
www.flu.gov