

## Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family from the Flu this School Year

The Centers for Disease Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
3. **Stay at home if your or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

If flu conditions become **MORE** severe, parents should consider the following steps:

- ◆ **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have completely gone away.
- ◆ **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home for 5 days** from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.

Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:

- ◆ Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed.
- ◆ Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other flu symptoms.
- ◆ Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age and those children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.
- ◆ Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.
- ◆ Update emergency contact lists.
- ◆ Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family member entertained if schools are dismissed or your child is sick and must stay home.
- ◆ Talk to your school administrators about their pandemic or emergency plan.

