

# Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Fact Sheet for Parents

## In your child's child care center

Some cases of influenza (flu) have been reported from your child's child care center. Flu is different from the common cold. It can cause fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, and vomiting. Flu can be very serious and may even cause death in some people with chronic health conditions, young children, pregnant women, or elderly persons.

## How does the flu spread?

Flu spreads between people when those sick with the flu cough, sneeze, or even talk. The flu virus can be spread to people up to six feet away. Flu can also spread when people touch their face or eyes after touching something that a sick person has touched.

## How to prevent the flu?

Use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "**Take 3 Actions**"

- 1. Take time to get a flu vaccine.** Flu vaccination is the best way to prevent the flu. DHEC strongly recommends all South Carolina residents older than 6 months old get the flu vaccine as soon as possible to prevent the flu, unless they have a medical reason not to be vaccinated.
- 2. Take everyday preventive actions.**
  - Avoid close contact with ill persons.
  - Keep your child home if they have a fever (100°F or higher).
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or upper sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
  - Frequently wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
  - Frequently clean and disinfect surfaces that are high-touch areas.
- 3. Take influenza antiviral medicines, if prescribed.** Antiviral drugs can make flu illness milder and shorten the time a person is sick with the flu. They may also prevent serious flu complications. Flu antiviral drugs are not designed to treat COVID-19.

## Quick Stats

CDC estimates that since 2010, flu-related hospitalizations among children younger than 5 years old have ranged from 7,000 to 26,000 per year (CDC, 2020).

While relatively rare, some children die from flu each year. From the 2004-2005 season to the 2019-2020 season, flu-related deaths in children reported to CDC during regular flu seasons have ranged from 37 to 199 deaths. It is noteworthy that among reported pediatric deaths, about 80% of those children were not fully vaccinated. Also of note, even though individual flu deaths in children must be reported to CDC, it is likely that not all deaths are captured and that the number of actual deaths is higher.

## Resources

More information is available at CDC and DHEC websites:

[cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu)

[scdhec.gov/flu](https://www.scdhec.gov/flu)

[cdc.gov/flu/prevent/preventing.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/preventing.htm)

[cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/children.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/children.htm)