

Letter to Parents About Flu Prevention

From Your Child Care Program

Dear Parents:

Now that child care and school is starting you may be concerned about protecting your child and family from the flu. Here are some things you can do now:

Plan Now For the Flu Season:

- Make plans NOW for home care for children that become ill with the flu.
- Talk to your employer about how you will manage if you or your child becomes ill.
- Check with your child's teachers and child care providers about home learning activities.
- Discuss with friends and family who would care for your child if you become ill. Update emergency contacts.
- Discuss special plans with your health care provider for your child or household members who have chronic medical conditions like asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, etc. because they are at higher risk of severe illness and complications from the flu.

Teach Your Children Healthy Habits:

- Cough and sneeze into a sleeve or elbow, not hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after toileting and before eating. Use a hand sanitizer if water is not available. Children need coaching (rub and scrub all surfaces for 20 seconds) on proper handwashing until about 8 years of age.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Tell you or their caregiver if they feel sick.

Keep Your Child Home if They Are Sick with the Flu:

- Keep them home for at least 24 hours after they are fever free (without the use of fever reducing medications).
- Do not send a sick child to another group child care program.
- Signs of flu are: fever with a cough or sore throat.
- Call your health care provider for advice on caring for an ill child or family member.
- Discuss exclusion guidelines with your child care provider
- Notify me as soon as possible if your child is being kept home because of flu so I can watch for signs of illness in the other children.

Plan to Get the Seasonal Flu Shot AND The Pandemic Flu Vaccine When it Becomes Available

- Annual **seasonal flu** vaccines are recommended for everyone, especially children ages 6 months to 18 years, people over age 50 or those with underlying medical conditions, and caregivers of children birth through 5 years.
- **Pandemic H1N1 (swine) flu** vaccine, as it becomes available, is strongly recommended for:
 - Pregnant women (to reduce complications and to protect their babies)
 - People caring for infants under 6 months of age (to protect **un**immunized babies)
 - Health care workers
 - All people from 6 months to 24 years (younger people seem to be getting the H1N1 flu more often)
 - People ages 25 to 64 with chronic medical conditions like asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, etc.

And, I'll be doing all I can to maintain a healthy child care program. Please discuss any concerns you may have.

Name of child care provider

Name of child care program

Date

For information on vaccinations check with your health care provider. Discuss your concerns if your child has chronic health conditions or allergies. Also check the City of Berkeley website www.cityofberkeley.info/publichealth/ or call Nurse of the Day at (510) 981-5300 for information on vaccinations, finding a medical provider, OR APPLYING FOR Medi-Cal.