

Pandemic Flu Toolkit

for Early/Child Care Providers and Families



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

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February 10, 2009

Preparing Child Care Providers for Pandemic Influenza in Los Angeles County... How Ready Are You?

Dear Child Care Provider,

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has developed a Pandemic Influenza (Flu) Toolkit with simple and practical ways to prepare child and early care providers in Los Angeles County for pandemic influenza (flu), seasonal flu and other types of emergencies. Influenza, also known as the flu, is a disease that attacks the respiratory tract (nose, throat, and lungs).

Seasonal flu is a flu that happens every year and can result in serious illness and cause death especially among very young children, seniors, and people with chronic health conditions. Every year approximately 200,000 in the United States people are hospitalized and 36,000 die from flu. Getting a flu vaccine (shot) is the best way to keep from getting sick with seasonal flu.

Pandemic flu is a flu that spreads around the world and affects a larger number of people. Right now there is no pandemic flu in the United States. Depending on how serious a flu pandemic is, up to 30 percent of Los Angeles County may become ill and many could die. A flu pandemic could also cause child care, schools and businesses to close. The toolkit will help you with important steps you can take to prepare and educate staff, children and their families. Many of the things you do to plan and prepare for seasonal flu are the same for pandemic flu.

The serious impact pandemic flu could have and the yearly impact seasonal flu has on young children and their families make it important to plan and prepare. Please use this toolkit to make sure you, the children you care for and their families stay healthy and safe. For more information, go to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health website at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

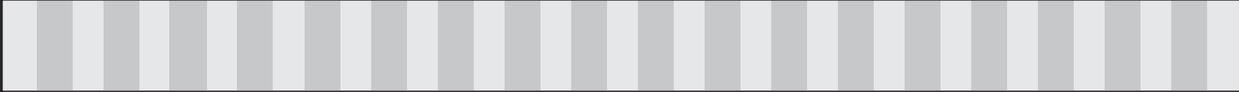
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan E. Fielding M.D.".

Jonathan E. Fielding M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

JEF:RAR:lg

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Introduction

How to Use this Toolkit

There have been three flu pandemics in the past 100 years. One of those was more serious than the others. Health experts feel it is important to plan and prepare in case there is another flu pandemic.

The *Pandemic Flu Toolkit* has been prepared for the home care, child care, and early care providers in Los Angeles County and the children and families they serve. This toolkit provides basic information on both seasonal and pandemic influenza (flu), offers action steps to help staff and families plan and prepare for a flu pandemic, and includes materials that staff and families can use to organize these efforts. Additionally the kit provides flu prevention activities providers can do that are specifically for children. While this toolkit highlights pandemic influenza, it also stresses information that is key in planning and preparing for seasonal flu and other types of emergencies as well.

This toolkit stresses the importance of easy, everyday steps that everyone can—and should—take to help stop the spread of flu during flu season and, especially, during a flu pandemic. The overall messages are simple and positive:

- Plan and prepare for a flu pandemic—and for other emergencies as well.
- Get a flu vaccine every year.
- Wash your hands often and well.
- Cover your coughs or sneezes with your elbow or sleeve.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Keep the center clean (including surfaces, toys, children’s and everyone’s hands).

Chapter Features

Each chapter includes these features:

Key Content: This section provides the key information that staff and families need to know in clear, simple language. Each topic is addressed in two to three paragraphs, with the use of bullets to highlight important information.

Definition Box: This section explains important terms. For example, Chapter 1, Understanding Flu, provides definitions for the words virus, seasonal flu, bird flu, and pandemic flu.

Action Steps: This section suggests specific steps that centers can take to develop their own pandemic influenza plans and to help families prepare for a flu pandemic or other long-term emergency. This section also directs staff to resources for more information.

Materials for Staff: This section provides resources, such as handouts and checklists, that relate to the chapter’s content and that will help centers become better prepared for a flu pandemic or other emergency. For example, the Materials for Staff in Chapter 2, Preparing for a Flu Pandemic, includes a checklist to help centers develop a communications plan.

Materials for Families: This section provides chapter-related resources, such as letters and handouts, for families. For example, the Materials for Families in Chapter 2, Preparing for a Flu Pandemic, includes a checklist for food, medical supplies, emergency supplies, and other items that

families will need to have on hand if they must stay home for several days or weeks during a flu pandemic.

Materials for Children: In Chapter 3: This section provides activities and activities pages for children to help learn the importance of correctly washing their hands, and covering their coughs and sneezes.

Icons

The Handouts, Checklists, Staff/Family Letters, Templates, Surveys, Fun Pages, and Coloring Pages are identified with one of the following icons for easy recognition.

 **Checklist**

 **Handout**

 **Staff/Family Letter**

 **Template** (*Word format document is provided on CD and online at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov*)

 **Survey**

 **Fun Page** (*requires reading skill*)

 **Coloring Page**

Chapter Overviews

Chapter 1: Understanding Flu

This chapter introduces the concept of pandemic flu as a serious illness that child care centers and providers need to plan and prepare for. It provides basic facts about the flu (such as symptoms, causes, when flu occurs, and how it spreads) and explains what pandemic flu is and how it is different from seasonal flu including how it may cause many people to become sick at the same time or may cause child care centers, schools, and some businesses to close. Information is provided on how to keep from getting sick with the flu and stresses the importance of getting a flu vaccine every year including who should get a flu vaccine and why.

Chapter 2: Preparing for a Flu Pandemic

This chapter discusses the importance of having policies and procedures (an emergency plan) in place *before* a flu pandemic or other emergency happens. This chapter helps centers prepare for large staff and child absences and how to communicate important information, such as if the center closes or reopens, to staff and to families.

The resources in this chapter will help child care and early care centers develop a communications plan; identify key job duties, staff and responsibilities, steps for cross-training staff; and identify community partners and organizations (e.g., the Red Cross, mental health care providers, etc.) that may be able to offer assistance during a flu pandemic or other emergency. The **Preparing to Stay Home** checklist is provided to help both staff and families identify food and medical supplies and other things that will be needed to stay at home during a flu pandemic or other emergency.

Chapter 3: Preventing the Spread of Flu

This chapter briefly reviews how flu is transmitted. It explains the simple, everyday things that staff, children, and families can do to prevent the spread of flu. This chapter stresses the importance of getting a flu vaccine every year, proper hand washing, covering coughs

and sneezes, and staying home when sick. This chapter also provides staff with steps for doing a daily health check and information on where to get a flu vaccine. Materials for families focus on information about the flu vaccine.

This chapter includes a special section on activities for children that will help them from getting the flu and spreading it to others. These activities, with step-by-step instructions for child care providers, teach children:

- when and how to wash their hands
- how to cover their coughs and sneezes

Coloring pages and materials to start a *Clean Hands Club* provide ongoing ways to practice prevention at the center and at home.

Chapter 4: During an Outbreak

This chapter provides information on what to expect and do during a flu pandemic. The information for centers focuses on when to send a staff member or child home, and steps to limit the spread of flu at the center. Materials include guidance on how staff and families can provide care at home if they or their families and children are sick, and measures public health officials may request that you do to help limit the spread of flu. The information for families includes signs of colds and the flu, when to keep children home if sick, center closure and how they will be contacted when it re-opens.

Chapter 5: Getting Back to Normal

This chapter helps centers and families with ongoing recovery from and during a flu pandemic. It includes information on what centers can do to help staff, children and families recover from and prepare for additional outbreaks of illness. Information for staff provides guidance on how to offer emotional support during stressful times and reinforces the importance of maintaining infection control measures and daily health checks. Materials for staff and families are meant to help identify and manage stress, and provide contact information to obtain basic resources and mental health and faith-based support.

Resources

For additional information on pandemic flu, seasonal flu, vaccines or emergency preparedness:

- www.publichealth.lacounty.gov or 1 (800) 427-8700
- www.pandemicflu.gov
- www.cdc.gov
- www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/epo
- www.findaflushot.com
- 2-1-1 (800) 339-6993 (Los Angeles County Referrals) Hearing impaired can also dial (800) 660-4026.
- To report any suspected outbreak of flu or illness to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, call: (213) 240-7821 or (888) 397-3993
- If you have a medical emergency, go to the nearest hospital with an emergency department or call 9-1-1. If you have a non-emergency question about someone who is sick and you do not have a doctor, call the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services health information line at (800) 427-8700 and ask for a referral to low cost or no-cost provider.

Chapter 1

Understanding Flu

Flu can be a serious illness. If too many people become very sick with the flu at about the same time, everyday life may change. For example, home care, child care, and early care centers, as well as schools and many businesses, may have to close to keep the flu from spreading. We don't know when a flu will become so serious that it makes many people sick at the same time, but it's important to plan and prepare for this—and for all emergencies.

Facts about Flu

What is the flu?

The flu, also known as influenza, is an illness that affects breathing and the respiratory system (nose, throat, and lungs). Each year, millions of people in the United States become sick with the flu. Many people get sick for about one week and then get better.

- Many people who get the flu do not need to see a doctor. Many people get better on their own by staying home, resting, and taking over-the-counter medications.
- Over-the-counter medications do not cure the flu but they may make you feel better.
- Antibiotics do not help treat flu. Some people may have antiviral medication prescribed by a doctor.
- Some people who get the flu do have to be hospitalized. Some people even die. Many of these people are elderly, very young children, or have a long-term illness.
- Children are more likely than adults to get sick with the flu, and children often spread the illness to others.
- Pregnant women are also at higher risk for becoming very sick with the flu.

What are the signs someone is sick with the flu?

When people get the flu, they usually get sick quickly or suddenly. When an adult gets sick with the flu, many of the signs are

- fever
- headache
- cough
- extreme tiredness
- sore throat
- body aches
- runny nose
- When infants and children get the flu, they may also get upset stomachs and vomit (throw up).
- The stomach flu is not related to the flu because it is not an illness of the nose, throat, or lungs.

When does flu occur?

Every year in the United States, people get sick with the flu, usually from October to early Spring. Those months are called flu season. December, January, and February are usually the months when the most people have the flu and others are most likely to get it.

What causes the flu?

Germs are tiny organisms, or living things, that can cause disease. Germs are so small that they can only be seen with a microscope. The germ that causes influenza is a virus.

- Flu viruses mutate (change) from year to year.
- Flu viruses travel and spread around the world.
- Because flu viruses are always changing, last year's flu vaccine won't protect you against this year's flu virus.

To be protected against the flu, you need to get a flu vaccine every year.

How does flu spread?

Flu is easily spread from person to person, usually through coughing and sneezing. When someone next to you sneezes or coughs, droplets of mucus (the wet, slimy stuff inside the nose) land on you. You can also get the flu when you touch a surface (such as a desktop, crayon, toy, faucet handle, etc.) that has flu virus on it and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.

How can you keep from getting sick with the flu?

The best way of protecting yourself from the flu is to get a flu vaccine every year.

Health experts recommend the following groups get a flu vaccine.

These groups are

- children six months to four years of age (they are at higher risk)

- children aged six months up to their 19th birthday
- pregnant women
- people 50 years of age and older
- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

There are two types of flu vaccine available for individuals:

- The **Flu shot** contains flu virus that are dead. It is given as a shot in the arm to people that are at least six months of age to adult. Two doses given at least one month apart are recommended for children six months to eight years who are receiving the flu shot for the first time.
- **FluMist™** is a nasal spray that contains weakened live flu virus. It is given to people that are at least two years and up to forty-nine years of age. Two doses given at least one month apart are recommended for children aged two to eight years who are receiving the flu shot for the first time. *This vaccine is **not** recommended for pregnant women or others with chronic health conditions.*

Getting the flu vaccine every year helps protect you from getting sick—and helps protect the children you work with and care about from getting sick.

- You can also help prevent spreading the flu by:
 - washing your hands often
 - coughing and sneezing into your elbow or sleeve—*not* your hands
 - avoiding touching your face
 - staying home when you are sick

What is bird flu?

Bird flu is another name for avian flu. Bird flu is caused by a flu virus that birds get from other birds.

- The bird flu virus can be deadly to birds, especially to poultry, such as chickens and turkeys. The current type of avian flu has killed millions of birds.

- At this time, bird flu does not spread easily to people and has only *rarely* spread from person to person.
- However, some people have gotten sick with bird flu. When people have gotten bird flu, they have usually gotten the virus from a sick bird.
- Currently, only people outside the United States, mostly in Asia, have gotten sick with bird flu.
- Many of the people who have gotten sick with the bird flu have died.
- Flu viruses are always changing. If the current bird flu changes and begins to spread easily from person to person, it could cause a flu pandemic.

What is pandemic flu?

Pandemic flu is a flu that causes a worldwide outbreak of illness. When many people around the world get sick with the flu at the same time, it's called a flu pandemic.

- Flu pandemics can be very serious, with many people getting sick or dying. In a serious pandemic, many people will become very sick.
- Flu pandemics can happen any time, not just during flu season.
- In a serious flu pandemic, child care centers, schools, and some businesses may close.
- It is very important to prepare for a possible flu pandemic and other emergencies.

Definitions

Antibiotics: Are used to treat a wide variety of bacterial infections. Antibiotics do not work for viral infections.

Antiviral: A medicine that can both treat flu and prevent infection.

Virus: A germ that cannot live on its own is a virus. Viruses must get into the cells of a plant, animal, or human to survive and create more viruses. When more viruses are created faster than the body can fight them off, a person gets sick. Viruses cause the flu, common colds, chickenpox, measles, and many other diseases.

Seasonal Flu: Every year in the United States, people get sick with the flu, usually between the months of October and March. Because the flu usually happens at this time of year, it is called seasonal flu.

Vaccine: A substance, usually given in a shot, to help protect against a specific disease.

Bird Flu: Bird flu is another name for avian flu. It caused by a flu virus that birds get from other birds.

Pandemic Flu: When flu happens in many places around the world at the same time.



Action Steps for Staff *(see Materials for Staff)*

1. Develop an Emergency Preparedness Plan
2. Include steps to prepare for pandemic influenza in your emergency preparedness plan.
3. Distribute and discuss **Flu Facts** and **The Importance of Being Prepared**.
4. Fill in the “two ways the center can be reached,” on the **Center May Have to Close** handout, and distribute.
5. Identify sources of information (such as the Public Health department) on dismissal and closure, and list this information in your emergency plan.
6. Seek additional information on pandemic flu at:
 - www.pandemicflu.gov
 - www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
 - bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov

Assign at least one person to check these Websites regularly.



Action Steps for Families *(see Materials for Families)*

1. Distribute **Flu Facts** letter.
2. Fill in the “two ways you can reach our center,” on the **What’s the difference between Seasonal Flu and Pandemic Influenza?** handout, and distribute.
3. Make sure center has current contact information for each family.

Materials for Staff

- Flu Facts (Letter)
 - Center May Have to Close (Letter)
 - The Importance of Being Prepared (Letter)
-

Flu Facts

Dear Staff:

Every year, many child care workers, children, and family members get sick with influenza, also known as the flu. With the flu, people often get sick quickly or suddenly. Many of the signs that someone is sick with the flu include:

- high fever
- body aches
- dry cough
- headache
- chills
- sore throat
- runny nose
- extreme tiredness



Infants and children may also get upset stomachs and vomit (throw up). Children are more likely than adults to get sick with the flu and to spread the illness to others. Pregnant women are at risk for becoming very sick with the flu, too.

Many people who get the flu are sick for about a week, but then feel better. But flu can also be a serious illness. Each year, many people are hospitalized and some die as a result of the flu. Many of these people are elderly or very young.

The best way of protecting yourself from the flu is to get a flu vaccine every year.

Health experts recommend the following groups get a flu vaccine.

These groups are

- children six months to four years of age (they are at higher risk)
- children aged six months up to their 19th birthday
- pregnant women
- people 50 years of age and older
- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

Flu Facts, continued

There are two types of flu vaccine available for individuals:

- The **Flu shot** contains flu virus that are dead. It is given as a shot in the arm to people that are at least six months of age to adult. Two doses given at least one month apart are recommended for children six months to eight years who are receiving the flu shot for the first time.
- **FluMist™** is a nasal spray that contains weakened live flu virus. It is given to people that are at least two years and up to forty-nine years of age. Two doses given at least one month apart are recommended for children aged two to eight years who are receiving the flu shot for the first time. *This vaccine is **not** recommended for pregnant women or others with chronic health conditions.*

Here are important things to remember about flu vaccines:

- A new flu vaccine is needed every year, because the flu virus is always changing.
- Flu shots are safe and cannot cause the flu (the flu viruses in the shot are dead).
- FluMist™ is also safe approved for flu prevention (the mist is weakened live virus).
- Protection from the flu is not instant, it takes about two weeks after you get your flu vaccine to be protected from becoming sick with the flu.
- The flu vaccine does not protect you from all illnesses, and doesn't give 100 percent protection against the flu, but it can help keep you from getting seriously sick with the flu.
- If you have never had the flu, you still need to get a flu vaccine every year.
- Flu shots are very safe and are given to millions of people each year. Some people may be sore for one or two days where they had the shot or have very mild flu-like symptoms.
- Pregnant women need flu shots, too, so they won't get sick. **When a pregnant woman gets a flu shot, it can also help protect the newborn baby from the flu.** Flu shots do not harm the baby. It is safe for women who are breastfeeding. FluMist™ is **not** recommended for pregnant women.



Flu Facts, continued

Here are some simple ways to keep from getting sick with the flu (and other illnesses, too) or giving the flu to other people:



- **Wash your hands often with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds or as long as it takes to sing the Happy Birthday song twice).**
- **Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve—not into your hands.**
- **If you cover your coughs and sneezes with tissue or your hands, be sure to wash your hands.**
- **Keep your hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth.**
- **Teach and reward your children or the children you care for to wash their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes too!**
- **Keep sick children at home. Children who go to the child care center or school when they are sick can give the flu to other children.**
- **If you are sick, stay home from work, school, or other public places.**



For more information on the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

Sincerely,

The Importance of Being Prepared

Dear Staff:

Almost every week there's a story in the news about a huge hurricane, earthquake, fire, or flood. While there's no way to tell ahead of time when a disaster will strike or how bad it will be, we can still prepare.

One of the best things we can do now to help protect ourselves and our families is to make an emergency plan and get ready. The more we are prepared now, the better chances we will have for living through and recovering from a future disaster.

You can prepare now by beginning to store enough food, medical supplies, and other supplies to last at least one or two weeks. Every time you go grocery shopping, pick up a few extra items on sale. You don't have to do it all at once!

Food should be nonperishable (will keep for a long time) and not need refrigeration. Food should also be easy to prepare, in case you are unable to cook.

Examples of foods to store include:

- ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups
- protein or fruit bars
- dry cereal or granola
- peanut butter or nuts
- dried fruit
- crackers
- canned juices
- bottled water (one gallon of water per person per day—two quarts for drinking and two quarts for preparing food and staying clean)
- cans or jars of baby food and formula
- pet food

As you stock food, think about the needs and tastes of the members in your household. Try to include foods they will enjoy and that are high in nutrition.

Give special attention to food for household members with special diets and allergies, and for babies, toddlers, and the elderly. Nursing mothers may need liquid formula, in case they are unable to breastfeed.

Include favorite and “comfort” foods. Be sure to have a manual can opener. And check your supplies regularly to be sure nothing has expired or spoiled.

The Importance of Being Prepared, continued

Examples of medical supplies include:

- prescribed medications and medical supplies (such as asthma inhalers, heart medication, and glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment)
- medicines for fever and pain relief, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol™) and ibuprofen (Advil™ or Motrin™) (Do not give aspirin to infants, children, or teenagers.)
- cleansing agents
- thermometer
- anti-diarrhea medication
- fluids with electrolytes
- sanitizing solution, to clean and sanitize toys, frequently used objects, and surfaces:
 - plain bleach and 1/4 cup measuring cup
 - add 1/4 cup of bleach to one gallon water
 - label container, “sanitizer.” Do not use this water for drinking.



Examples of other emergency supplies include:

- soap
- alcohol-based hand cleaner
- flashlight, extra batteries
- portable radio
- personal hygiene supplies
- plastic garbage bags with ties
- tissue, toilet paper, disposable diapers
- bottled water

Be sure to talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, and what will be needed to care for them in the home.

In case of an emergency, make sure the center has your contact information and keep it updated.

Finally, stay informed. Pay attention to and seek information from public health officials on prevention and control. For more information on emergency planning and preparedness, go to:

- www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
- www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/epo/
- www.pandemicflu.gov

Sincerely,

Center May Have to Close

Dear Staff,

Currently, many people are sick with the flu. When many people get sick around the world at the same time, it's called a flu pandemic.



Closing child care centers and schools may help limit the spread of illness during a flu pandemic. If more and more people become ill, health officials may order home care, child care, and early care centers, as well as schools and some businesses, to close. Children may be more likely than adults to get sick with the flu, and children often spread the illness to others.

Health officials' recommendations about closing home care, child care, and early care centers may change quickly. To find out if you should come to work or not during a flu pandemic or other emergency, here are two ways you can reach the center:

Make sure we have your contact information and that it is updated. If the center must close, we will contact you and the families of the children we care for. We will also contact you and our families again as soon as we know we can reopen.

For more information on the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov, or call 2-1-1 (800) 339-6993 (Los Angeles County Referrals).

Sincerely,

Materials for Families

- Flu Facts (Letter)
 - What's the Difference between
Seasonal Flu and Pandemic
Influenza (Handout)
-



Flu Facts

Dear Family:

Every year, many child care workers, children, and family members get sick with influenza, also known as the flu. With the flu, people often get sick quickly or suddenly. Many of the signs that someone is sick with the flu include:

- high fever
- body aches
- dry cough
- headache
- chills
- sore throat
- runny nose
- extreme tiredness



Infants and children may also get upset stomachs and vomit (throw up). Children are more likely than adults to get sick with the flu and to spread the illness to others. Pregnant women are at risk for becoming very sick with the flu, too.

Many people who get the flu are sick for about a week, but then feel better. But flu can also be a serious illness. Each year, many people are hospitalized and some die as a result of the flu. Many of these people are elderly or very young.

The best way of protecting yourself from the flu is to get a flu vaccine every year.

Health experts recommend the following groups get a flu vaccine.

These groups are

- children six months to four years of age (they are at higher risk)
- children aged six months up to their 19th birthday
- pregnant women
- people 50 years of age and older
- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu



Flu Facts, continued

There are two types of flu vaccine available for individuals:

- The **Flu shot** contains flu virus that are dead. It is given as a shot in the arm to people that are at least six months of age to adult. Two doses given at least one month apart are recommended for children six months to eight years who are receiving the flu shot for the first time.
- **FluMist™** is a nasal spray that contains weakened live flu virus. It is given to people that are at least two years and up to forty-nine years of age. Two doses given at least one month apart are recommended for children aged two to eight years who are receiving the flu shot for the first time. *This vaccine is **not** recommended for pregnant women or others with chronic health conditions.*

Here are important things to remember about flu vaccines:

- A new flu vaccine is needed every year, because the flu virus is always changing.
- Flu shots are safe and cannot cause the flu (the flu viruses in the shot are dead).
- FluMist™ is also safe and approved for flu prevention (the mist is weakened live virus).
- Protection from the flu is not instant, it takes about two weeks after you get your flu vaccine to be protected from becoming sick with the flu.
- The flu vaccine does not protect you from all illnesses, and doesn't give 100 percent protection against the flu, but it can help keep you from getting seriously sick with the flu.
- If you have never had the flu, you still need to get a flu vaccine every year.
- Flu shots are very safe and are given to millions of people each year. Some people may be sore for one or two days where they had the shot or have very mild flu-like symptoms.
- Pregnant women need flu shots, too, so they won't get sick. **When a pregnant woman gets a flu shot, it can also help protect the newborn baby from the flu.** Flu shots do not harm the baby. It is safe for women who are breastfeeding. FluMist™ is **not** recommended for pregnant women.





Flu Facts, continued

Here are some simple ways to keep from getting sick with the flu (and other illnesses, too) or giving the flu to other people:



- **Wash your hands often with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds or as long as it takes to sing the Happy Birthday song twice).**
- **Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve—not into your hands.**
- **If you cover your coughs and sneezes with tissue or your hands, be sure to wash your hands.**
- **Keep your hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth.**
- **Teach and reward your children or the children you care for to wash their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes too!**
- **Keep sick children at home. Children who go to the child care center or school when they are sick can give the flu to other children.**
- **If you are sick, stay home from work, school, or other public places.**



For more information on the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

Sincerely,

What's the Difference between Seasonal Flu and Pandemic Flu?

Seasonal Flu

- Seasonal flu is the flu that happens every year.
- Seasonal flu usually starts in October and lasts through Spring. These months are called “flu season.”
- December, January, and February are the months when the most people usually get sick with the flu.
- Every flu season, many people may become sick. Some people become so sick they need to go to the hospital, and some people even die.
- Very young children, old people, and pregnant women are at risk for becoming very sick with the flu.
- Most children and adults get over the seasonal flu within one week.
- The best ways to prevent seasonal flu and to keep from spreading it to others is to:
 - get a flu vaccine every year
 - wash your hands often
 - cover your coughs and sneezes
 - keep your hands away from your face
 - stay home when you are sick

Pandemic Flu

- Pandemic flu is different from seasonal flu.
- With pandemic flu, large numbers of people all around the world may get sick at about the same time.
- In a severe pandemic, many people may become very sick.
- During a pandemic, even young adults and very healthy people might get sick.
- Child care centers, schools, and some businesses may close to help slow the spread of flu.

In case of pandemic flu or other emergency, here are two ways you can reach our center:

Make sure the center has your contact information and keep it updated. During a flu pandemic, it is important to wash your hands often, cover your coughs and sneezes, and stay away from others, if you are sick.

For more information on emergency planning and preparedness, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

Chapter 2

Preparing for a Flu Pandemic

We don't know how serious the next pandemic will be, but the steps in this chapter are important for preparing for pandemic influenza and other other emergencies. During a flu pandemic, many staff may be absent because they are sick, caring for a family member who is sick, or because they are trying not to get sick themselves. In a very serious flu pandemic, home care, child care, and early care centers, as well as schools and many businesses, may close to help keep the flu from spreading. To prepare for a flu pandemic, ask yourself these questions:

- Will you be able to stay open if 10 to 30 percent of your staff is absent or more than half the children are absent for several weeks or even months?
- How will you communicate important information, such as if you close or reopen, to staff and to families?

There are many steps home care and child care centers can take now to help prepare for this—and for all emergencies.

The purpose of an emergency plan is to have policies and procedures in place *before* an event occurs. If you do not have an emergency plan, this chapter will help you get started. If you already have an emergency

plan, this chapter will help you include pandemic flu as part of your preparedness planning.

Planning and Preparing for Emergencies

How will the center communicate with staff and families?

During an emergency clear and frequent communication is essential. Many staff members and families will look to centers to provide information and updates. It's important to plan ahead so that staff and families know how to contact you or can be contacted during an emergency. Keep all contact data updated.

With staff

- Communicate with staff about the seriousness of flu and provide basic information on pandemic flu. Include information on how to prevent from getting sick, how to keep it from spreading to others, and how to take care of yourself or someone at home (home care).
- Describe the steps you are taking to prepare for an influenza pandemic, such as:
 - addressing pandemic influenza in your emergency preparedness plan
 - including any potential changes to personnel policies
 - stressing the importance of staying home if staff are ill or are sick with the flu
- Provide staff with at least two ways to get in touch with the center in case of emergency.
- Update emergency contact information for all staff.
- Select one person to identify reliable sources of information and watch for public health warnings about flu, school closings, and other actions that may be taken to prevent the spread of flu.

- Create a call-down list. The call-down list starts with the name of the person who should be notified first, then the next person, then the next person, and so on. This list includes staff emergency contact information (e.g., home phone numbers/personal cell phone numbers). This will help the center communicate quickly and efficiently in the event of an emergency.
- You may want to practice or test the call-down list once or twice a year.

With families

- Communicate with families about the seriousness of flu and provide basic information on pandemic flu.
 - Distribute the letter on **Flu Facts** (from Chapter 1) to families.
 - Distribute other letters and handouts (for example, **The Flu Vaccine**) throughout the year.
- Distribute the **Family Emergency Contacts** template to families. Have families fill out two copies (one copy for the center, one copy for themselves). Update this information regularly.
- Encourage families to have another option for child care for their children if the center needs to close during a flu pandemic. Give them ideas about where they might seek help based on your knowledge of the local child care community and other family support agencies.

How will the center continue to operate with staff shortages?

It is important to identify all the ways a flu pandemic might affect your center. Develop a plan of action. (For example, you might have problems with food service, transportation, supplies, or staffing.)

- Make plans to cross-train staff.
 - Develop clear job descriptions.
 - Identify essential job duties and responsibilities; identify key staff (the staff who carry out these tasks). At least two people should be assigned to a task, one primary and one as backup.

- Provide training so staff will have the skills and abilities to perform more than one essential job duty.
- Identify non-essential job duties (jobs or tasks that may be placed on hold during an emergency).
- Identify supplies and services that are necessary for day-to-day operations.
- Create a chain of command that lists alternate leadership/management positions.
- During a flu pandemic, you may need help from other community-based organizations.
 - Develop a list of agencies or individuals you would like your child care center to work with.
 - Call or meet with those on the list to get to know one another and to find out what each other's needs are. Invite them to visit your center; visit their center. Plan how you will work together or support each other during an emergency or if your center closes. Discuss the option of sharing staff, supplies, or space.
 - Consider locations/other agencies for alternate child care sites.
 - Identify local sources for mental health counseling and faith-based support.

Definitions

- **Emergency:** Any natural or “man-made” event that causes the center to close, makes many staff sick, or requires that staff, children, and families stay at home.
- **Plan:** Instructions describing how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency. The purpose of a plan is to have policies and procedures in place *before* an emergency occurs.



Action Steps for Staff *(see Materials for Staff)*

*Helpful Hint: Have your staff use **pencil** when filling out templates, so this information can be easily updated as necessary.*

1. Review the **Communications Plan Checklist** and use it to create a communications plan.
2. Distribute **Job Description and Contact Information** and have staff fill in and return.
3. Distribute **Staff Emergency Contacts** and have staff fill in and return. Have them update this regularly.
4. Fill in the **Call-down List** as part of the communications plan.
5. Distribute and discuss the **Infection Control Policy (Example)**.
6. Write down infection control steps as part of the pandemic preparedness plan.
7. Identify three partners in the community (for example, Red Cross) and list these resources, along with contact information, on the **Partner Organization** plan.
8. Identify mental health and faith-based resources; list these resources, along with contact information, in the plan.
9. Distribute the **Preparing to Stay Home** checklist and encourage staff to stay home and away from others when they are sick.
10. Encourage staff to review other sources of information on pandemic flu and emergency preparedness. For example:
 - www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
 - www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/epo/
 - www.pandemicflu.gov



Action Steps for Families *(see Materials for Families)*

1. Distribute the **Preparing to Stay Home** checklist.
2. Distribute **Family Emergency Contacts** and have families fill in and return one copy and keep one copy for themselves. Have them update the information regularly.

Materials for Staff

- Communications Plan Checklist (Checklist)
 - Job Descriptions and Contact Information Template (Template)
 - Staff Emergency Contacts (Checklist)
 - Call-down List (Template)
 - Partner Organizations (Template)
 - Preparing to Stay Home Checklist (Letter)
 - Infection Control Policy Example (Handout)
-

Communications Plan Checklist

Information to Obtain or Provide	Date Started	In Progress	Date Completed or Updated
Emergency Contacts			
<p>Staff have been provided with two ways to contact the center. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ 			
<p>Emergency contact information has been gathered for all staff. This information can be found (describe location):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ 			
<p>Emergency contact information has been gathered for all center children and their families. This information can be found (describe location):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ 			
<p>Contact information about school dismissals and center closures can be found at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.publichealth.lacounty.gov • _____ • _____ 			
Sources of Accurate Information			
<p>One person has been assigned to monitor information and watch for public health warnings about flu, center closings, student dismissals, etc.</p> <p>That person is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ <p>That person's contact information is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ 			
<p>Online sources of information on emergency preparedness and flu can be found at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.publichealth.lacounty.gov • www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/epo/ • www.pandemicflu.gov 			

Communications Plan Checklist, continued

Information to Obtain or Provide	Date Started	In Progress	Date Completed or Updated
Information has been distributed to staff:			
Chapter 1			
• Flu Facts (Letter)			
• Center May Have to Close (Letter)			
• The Importance of Being Prepared (Letter)			
Chapter 2			
• Communications Plan (Checklist)			
• Job Descriptions and Contact Information (Template)			
• Staff Emergency Contacts (Checklist)			
• Call-down List (Template)			
• Partner Organizations (Template)			
• Preparing to Stay Home Checklist (Letter)			
• Infection Control Policy (Example) (Handout)			
Chapter 3			
• Flu Myths and Facts (Handout)			
• The Flu Vaccine (Handout)			
• Simple Handwashing Steps (Handout)			
• Daily Health Check (Handout)			
• Where to Get a Flu Vaccine In LA County (Template)			
Chapter 4			
• Is it a Cold or the Flu? (Handout)			
• When to Send a Child or Staff Member Home (Handout)			
• Home Care for the Flu (Handout)			
• When to Stay Home (Handout)			
• What to Expect During a Flu Pandemic (Handout)			
• Infection Control Checklist (Checklist)			
• Daily Sick Log (Checklist)			
Chapter 5			
• Signs of Stress (Handout)			
• Ways to Manage Stress (Handout)			
• Providing Emotional Comfort, Care, and Support to Staff, Children, and their Families (Handout)			

Communications Plan Checklist, continued

Information to Obtain or Provide	Date Started	In Progress	Date Completed or Updated
Information has been distributed to families:			
Chapter 1			
• Flu Facts (Letter)			
• What's the Difference between Seasonal Flu and Pandemic Influenza? (Handout)			
Chapter 2			
• Family Emergency Contacts (Checklist)			
• Preparing to Stay Home (Handout)			
Chapter 3			
• Flu Myths and Facts (Handout)			
• The Flu Vaccine (Handout)			
• Simple Handwashing Steps (Handout)			
• Who Should Get a Flu Vaccine? (Survey)			
• Where to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA County (Handout)			
• What I Learned Today (Letter)			
• Activities for Children			
Chapter 4			
• Is it a Cold or the Flu? (Handout)			
• When to Keep Your Child Home (Handout)			
• Home Care for the Flu (Handout)			
• What to Expect During a Flu Pandemic (Handout)			
• Center is Open During Pandemic (Letter)			
• Center Will Close (Letter)			
Chapter 5			
• Signs of Stress (Handout)			
• Ways to Manage Stress (Handout)			
• Center is Open (Letter)			
• Staying Prepared (Letter)			



Job Descriptions and Contact Information

Job Title and Description of Tasks Performed	Key Staff? (mark yes or no)		Staff Person	Contact Info (home and cell phone numbers)		Backup Staff	Contact Info (home and cell phone numbers)	
	yes	no		home:	cell:		home:	cell:
	yes	no		home:	cell:		home:	cell:
	yes	no		home:	cell:		home:	cell:
	yes	no		home:	cell:		home:	cell:
	yes	no		home:	cell:		home:	cell:
	yes	no		home:	cell:		home:	cell:
	yes	no		home:	cell:		home:	cell:
	yes	no		home:	cell:		home:	cell:

Staff Emergency Contacts

Emergency Information for: _____
(name)

Name	Home	Work	Cell Phone
Spouse/Partner			
Other Family Member			
Out-of-town contact			
Other			

Call-down List

Person Calling	Persons to Call	Office	Cell	Home
1	2			
	3			
	4			
2	5			
	6			
	7			
3	8			
	9			
	10			
4	11			
	12			
	13			
5	14			
	15			
	16			
6	17			
	18			
	19			
7	20			
	21			
	22			

Partner Organizations

Agency Name	Address	Contact Person (include job title)	Contact Information
Emergency Preparedness Organizations (e.g., Red Cross)			
Day Care Centers (including Head Start)			
Government Agencies (e.g., LA County Public Health Department)			
Mental Health Counseling and Faith-based Support			
Other Community-based Organizations			

Preparing to Stay Home

In case of a flu pandemic or other emergency, you and your family may have to stay home for several days, weeks, or even longer. Prepare now by beginning to store enough food, medical supplies, and other supplies for each person in your household. Every time you go grocery shopping, pick up a few extra items on sale. You don't have to do it all at once!



To get started:

- Check your house for supplies you already have on hand.
- Decide where you will store supplies.

Items to Store	Date Started	In Progress	Date Completed	Six Month Expiration Date Check
Food, such as:				
• ready-to-eat meals that need only a little water or cooking to prepare				
• canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups				
• protein or fruit bars				
• dry cereal or granola				
• peanut butter or unsalted nuts				
• dried fruit				
• low-salt crackers				
• canned juices				
• bottled water (one gallon of water per person per day—two quarts for drinking and two quarts for preparing food and staying clean)				
• plain bleach and medicine dropper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to purify water for drinking, add 16 drops of bleach to one gallon water 				
• foods for special needs (such as cans or jars of baby food and formula, foods for household members with allergies or other conditions)				
• favorite foods				
• food for pets (if you have them)				
• manual can opener (non-electric)				
Medical Supplies				
• prescribed medications (such as asthma inhalers and heart medication)				
• medical supplies (such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment)				
• medicines for fever and pain relief				
• supplies to clean and disinfect wounds				
• thermometer				
• anti-diarrhea medication				

Preparing to Stay Home, continued

Items to Store	Date Started	In Progress	Date Completed	Six Month Expiration Date Check
Medical Supplies, continued				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fluids with electrolytes that help you if you get dehydrated, for people age 12 or older Electrolyte drink recipe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 quart of drinking or boiled water • 1/4 teaspoon baking soda • 1/4 teaspoon table salt • 2 tablespoons of sugar Mix well until the salt and sugar dissolve. Add lemon juice for flavor, if desired. <i>(Note: If you don't have baking soda, add another 1/4 teaspoon of salt.)</i>				
Sanitizing solution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plain bleach and 1/4 cup measuring cup Add 1/4 cup of bleach to one gallon water. Label container, "sanitizer." <i>Do not use for drinking.</i>				
Emergency Supplies				
• soap/water				
• alcohol-based hand cleaner				
• flashlight, extra batteries				
• portable radio (non-electric)				
• camp stove and fuel				
• sanitary napkins, tampons				
• plastic garbage bags with ties				
• tissue, toilet paper, disposable diapers				
Home Entertainment Supplies				
• books				
• board games				
• playing cards				
• arts and crafts supplies				
• gear for yard games (such as soccer ball, baseball and mitts, basketball, jump rope)				
Emergency Contacts				
• health care provider				
• friends				
• family				
• neighbors				
• work				
• pharmacy				
• child care				
• school				

Infection Control Policy (Example)

To limit the spread of germs that cause illness, keep the child care center clean and make sure that supplies are available. It's also important to provide ongoing education and support to staff, children, and families on limiting the spread of infection, such as how to keep the center clean, proper hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and watching for signs of illness in children.

For example:

Give special attention to teaching staff, children, and their families about respiratory and hand hygiene (hand washing and keeping coughs and sneezes covered) and cleaning toys and surfaces frequently.

Keep a list and supply of things you will need to help control the spread of infection, such as soap, bleach, paper towels, and tissues. Store the supplies where they are easy to find, but in places that are safe from children.

Teach staff a standard set of steps for checking children and adults each day as they arrive to see if they are sick. Children and adults who are sick should stay home and away from others.

In general, encourage staff, children, and families to:

- Get a flu vaccine every year.
- Wash their hands often with soap and water.
- Cough or sneeze into their elbow or sleeve—*not* into their hands.
- Cover their coughs and sneezes with tissue.
- Make sure that tissues are available in all nurseries, child care rooms, and common areas (such as reading rooms, classrooms, and rooms where meals are provided).
- Encourage care providers and children to wash their hands as soon as possible, if they have sneezed or coughed on their hands.
- Remind staff and children to keep their hands away from their nose, eyes, and mouths.
- Teach children to wash their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes.
- Check all children for signs of illness, especially when there is an increase in flu in the community.

Staff

- Observe closely all infants and children for symptoms of illness. Notify the parent if a child develops a fever, chill, cough, sore throat, headache, or muscle aches. Send the child home, if possible, and advise the parent to contact the child's doctor.
- Remind parents to keep children home when they are sick and to keep a list of symptoms.
 - To prevent the spread of illness to others, parents should keep sick children home and away from the child care setting until they have been without symptoms, such as fever, for 24 hours.
- Encourage all staff to stay home, if they are sick.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the best way to help prevent the spread of germs that cause flu and other illnesses!



When you wash, use warm water and soap. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds, making sure to scrub the backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails. Rinse well under warm water and use a paper towel to dry your hands. (Germs can live for hours on fabric, so do not use cloth towels to dry your hands.) Use hand lotion to prevent drying and cracking of skin. Wash your hands regularly and often.

Wash Your Hands	
Before ...	After ...
starting work	eating or drinking
preparing food	preparing food
serving food	visiting the restroom
eating	helping a child in restroom
putting on a Band-aid	putting on a Band-aid
taking a medication	coughing or sneezing
	wiping a child's nose
	changing diapers

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Cleaning and sanitizing toys, frequently used objects, and surfaces is an important way to prevent and control the spread of illness. Use an approved sanitizer, such as diluted bleach, to kill germs. Always follow label instructions.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces, toys, and commonly shared items at least daily and when visibly soiled.
- Use a household disinfectant registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and labeled for use against bacteria and viruses, a hospital disinfectant registered by the EPA, or a chlorine bleach/hypochlorite solution registered by the EPA.
- If chlorine bleach registered by the EPA is not available and a generic (store brand) chlorine bleach is used, mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of cool water to use as a sanitizer. Label container, “sanitizer.” **Do not** use this water for drinking.
- Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children.
- Always wear gloves to protect skin from bleach or other chemicals.
- Dispose of gloves and rags that were used and wash hands.

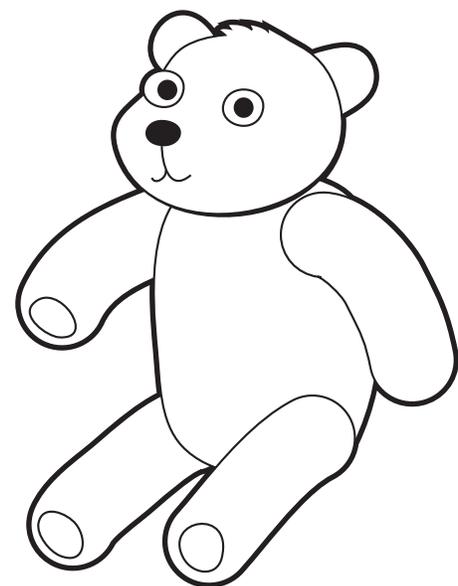


Toys and Equipment

In general, soft, cuddly toys should be avoided because washing is more difficult. Infants should play with washable toys that are disinfected before and after use by another infant.

When cleaning non-absorbent toys, such as blocks or plastic toys, wash them with soap and water. Rinse in a sanitizing solution. Air dry.

When cleaning fabric toys such as stuffed animals or play clothes, wash them in a washing machine. Air dry or machine dry.



Materials for Families

- Family Emergency Contacts
(Checklist)
 - Preparing to Stay Home
(Handout)
-

Family Emergency Contacts

Emergency Information for: _____
 (child's name)

Name	Home	Work	Cell Phone
Parent/Guardian			
Other household or family member			
Friend			
Out-of-town contact			
Other			

Preparing to Stay Home

In case of a flu pandemic or other emergency, you and your family may have to stay home for several days, weeks, or even longer. Prepare now by beginning to store enough food, medical supplies, and other supplies for each person in your household. Every time you go grocery shopping, pick up a few extra items on sale. You don't have to do it all at once!

To get started:

- Check your house for supplies you already have on hand.
- Decide where you will store supplies.
- Keep your Family Emergency Contacts list up-to-date and in an easy-to-find place.

Items to Store	Date Started	In Progress	Date Completed	Six Month Expiration Date Check
Food, such as:				
• ready-to-eat meals that need only a little water or cooking to prepare				
• canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups				
• protein or fruit bars				
• dry cereal or granola				
• peanut butter or unsalted nuts				
• dried fruit				
• low-salt crackers				
• canned juices				
• bottled water (one gallon of water per person per day—two quarts for drinking and two quarts for preparing food and staying clean)				
• plain bleach and medicine dropper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to purify water for drinking, add 16 drops of bleach to one gallon water 				
• foods for special needs (such as cans or jars of baby food and formula, foods for household members with allergies or other conditions)				
• favorite foods				
• food for pets (if you have them)				
• manual can opener (non-electric)				
Medical Supplies				
• prescribed medications (such as asthma inhalers and heart medication)				
• medical supplies (such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment)				
• medicines for fever and pain relief				
• supplies to clean and disinfect wounds				



Preparing to Stay Home, continued

Items to Store	Date Started	In Progress	Date Completed	Six Month Expiration Date Check
Medical Supplies, continued				
• thermometer				
• anti-diarrhea medication				
• fluids with electrolytes that help you if you get dehydrated, for people age 12 or older Electrolyte drink recipe: • 1 quart of drinking or boiled water • 1/4 teaspoon baking soda • 1/4 teaspoon table salt • 2 tablespoons of sugar Mix well until the salt and sugar dissolve. Add lemon juice for flavor, if desired. <i>(Note: If you don't have baking soda, add another 1/4 teaspoon of salt.)</i>				
Sanitizing solution: • plain bleach and 1/4 cup measuring cup Add 1/4 cup of bleach to one gallon water. Label container, "sanitizer." <i>Do not use for drinking.</i>				
Emergency Supplies				
• soap/water				
• alcohol-based hand cleaner				
• flashlight, extra batteries				
• portable radio (non-electric)				
• camp stove and fuel				
• sanitary napkins, tampons				
• plastic garbage bags with ties				
• tissue, toilet paper, disposable diapers				
Home Entertainment Supplies				
• books				
• board games				
• playing cards				
• arts and crafts supplies				
• gear for yard games (such as soccer ball, baseball and mitts, basketball, jump rope)				
Emergency Contacts				
• health care provider				
• friends				
• family				
• neighbors				
• work				
• pharmacy				
• child care				
• school				

Chapter 3

Preventing the Spread of Flu

Young children have an increased risk for getting the flu. Children under the age of five years may get very sick when they have the flu. Children under the age of two years are especially likely to go to the hospital because of the flu. Children also are more likely to spread the flu to other people, especially to other children and their families. It is important to understand how the flu is spread (transmitted) and how to reduce the spread of the virus that causes flu in child care or early care settings.

How Flu Is Spread

Flu is easily spread from person to person, usually through coughing and sneezing.

- When someone next to you sneezes or coughs, droplets of mucus (the wet, slimy stuff inside the nose) may land on you.
- These droplets of mucus can spray through the air for three or more feet and can land on other surfaces, too.

- Flu droplets do not float around in the air. You do not need an air purifier and you don't need to turn off air conditioning or heater to stop the spread of the flu droplets.
- When you touch something (such as a desktop, crayon, toy, faucet handle, doorknob, etc., or shake a person's hand) that has the flu virus on it and then touch your own eyes, nose, or mouth, the flu virus can get into your body and make you sick.

How to Prevent the Spread of Flu

You can do several things to help prevent spreading—or getting—the flu. These things are simple to do. They are

- Get a flu vaccine every year.
- Wash your hands properly and often. Use soap and warm water; wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve or elbow—*not* your hands. If you use your hands or a tissue, wash your hands afterward.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home and away from others if you are sick.

And as a child care provider, be sure to do a daily health check of your children and keep the center clean. Remember to clean surfaces, toys, and children's hands.

Why get a flu vaccine?

The best way of protecting yourself from the flu is to get a flu vaccine every year.

Health experts recommend the following groups get a flu vaccine.

These groups are

- children six months to four years of age (they are at higher risk)
- children aged six months up to their 19th birthday

- pregnant women
- people 50 years of age and older
- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

Health experts recommend that anyone who wishes to lower their risk of getting sick with the flu, get a flu vaccine. Getting a flu vaccine will protect you and the people around you including small children, seniors and people who have weaker immune systems.

Why do I have to get a flu vaccine every year?

Last year's flu vaccine won't protect you against this year's flu virus.

- The germ that causes influenza is a virus. (Germs are tiny organisms, or living things, that can cause disease. Germs are so small that they can only be seen with a microscope.)
- Flu viruses are always mutating (changing) from year to year.
- Because flu viruses are always changing, you need to get a flu vaccine every year to be protected against a new and different flu virus.
- Antibiotics will not help treat or prevent flu viruses. Some people may have antiviral medication prescribed by a doctor.

Why is hand washing so important?

Along with getting a flu vaccine, washing your hands often—and properly—is the single most effective thing you can do to help prevent the spread of flu virus.

Wash your hands often! Always wash your hands:

- after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- before and after preparing food
- before eating
- before and after changing diapers

- after doing chores, especially when handling garbage or doing yard work
- before and after caring for someone who is sick or hurt

Why do I need to cover my cough or sneeze?

Flu virus spreads mainly through droplets from coughs and sneezes. So covering coughs and sneezes limits the distance these droplets spray. It also controls what and who they land on.

You can usually tell when you are about to cough or sneeze. So, when you feel a cough or sneeze coming on:

- move away from other people, if possible
- cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve—*not* into your hands
- if you cover your mouth and nose with a tissue as you cough or sneeze, always wash your hands afterward and put the tissue in a waste basket

Why is it important to keep my hands away from my face?

One of the main ways that germs and flu virus get into our bodies and make us sick is through the eyes, nose, and mouth. Touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with dirty hands lets flu virus and other disease-causing germs get into your body and make you sick. If you must touch your face, wash your hands first!

What are some other ways that flu virus spreads?

A person who has the flu can leave the flu virus on the things he or she touches. For example, if a person coughs or sneezes into his or her hand and then opens a door, the doorknob will have flu virus on it. Other examples of everyday objects that can have flu virus on them are light switches, telephones, computer keyboards, and toys.

Flu virus also spreads through close personal contact between people, such as kissing, hugging, or even shaking hands. And sharing personal items may mean sharing the flu virus, too. Drinking from someone else's

cup, sharing makeup (such as lipstick), or borrowing a family member's toothbrush are examples of how you can spread saliva or mucus with flu virus in it.

Children can spread germs and viruses when they share toys, equipment, or play together.

Why should a person who is sick with the flu stay home?

Adults who have the flu can spread it to other people (are contagious) one to two days before they have any signs of illness (symptoms) and know they are sick. Adults continue to be contagious for about three to five days after their symptoms start.

Children are more likely than adults to spread the flu to other people. And they are contagious for a longer time. Children can continue to spread the flu for up to seven days after they become sick.

To help prevent spreading the flu virus, stay home from work, school, or other outings. As much as possible, keep your distance from other household members while you are at home.

Most children and adults can usually go back to their regular activities once symptoms (such as fever and cough) are gone.

Stay home if you are sick, but if you must go out, wearing a surgical mask may help to keep you from spreading flu virus and getting other people sick, too. Wearing a surgical mask may not protect you from becoming sick with the flu.

What are some simple steps for doing a daily health check?

Checking children's health on a daily basis can help prevent the spread of illness, especially during flu season or a flu pandemic. A simple health check usually takes less than a minute.

I. Listen

When you greet the child ask how he or she is. Also ask the parent/guardian how the child is doing.

- Listen to what the child and parent/guardian tell you about how the child is feeling.
- If the child can talk, listen for complaints. Is the child hoarse or wheezing? Is he or she coughing, breathing fast, or having difficulty breathing?

Also ask about any illness in the family. This will alert you to the possibility the child may become sick in a day or two and may be contagious.

2. Look

Get down to the child's level to see her clearly. Look for signs of health or illness.

- Is the child's behavior unusual for this time of day? Is the child clinging to the parent/guardian, acting cranky, crying, or fussing?
- Does the child appear listless, in pain, or moving with difficulty?
- Does the child look pale or flushed?
- Does the child feel hot to the touch?
- Does the child have a rash, sores, swelling, or bruising? Is the child scratching the skin or scalp?
- Do the child's eyes look red, crusty, goopy, or watery?
- Does the child have a runny nose? Or is the child pulling at the ears?
- Does the child have mouth sores, drool excessively, or swallow with difficulty?

If a child is sick and should not be around others, call the child's parents or guardian. It is important to have updated contact information for anyone who is authorized to take a child away from the center. Until the parent or guardian arrives, keep the child in a comfortable place that has been set aside for sick children and away from other children.

Definitions

- **Contagious:** Having an illness and being able to spread it to other people.
- **Transmission:** The way a disease is spread.
- **Respiratory:** Having to do with the nose, throat, and lungs.
- **Vaccine:** A substance, usually given in a shot, to help protect against a specific disease.



Action Steps for Staff *(see Materials for Staff)*

1. Go to www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm to get a free copy of the CDC *Cover Your Cough* poster. Display poster in center.
2. Distribute **Flu Myths and Facts**, **The Flu Shot**, **Simple Handwashing Steps**, and **Daily Health Check** and discuss as needed.
3. Report any suspected outbreak of flu or illness to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (888) 397-3993. For a complete list of reportable illnesses, go to the following Website: www.lapublichealth.org
4. Distribute **Where to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA County** template and have staff fill in and keep for a reference.
5. Start a *Clean Hands Club*.
6. Review online resources, such as:
 - www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
 - www.cdc.gov



Action Steps for Families *(see Materials for Families)*

1. Distribute **Flu Myths and Facts**, **The Flu Vaccine**, and **Simple Handwashing Steps** handouts.
2. Distribute the **Who Should Get the Flu Vaccine?** survey and encourage families to review.
3. **Where to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA County** and encourage families to fill in and use as a reference.
4. Send home the **What I Learned Today** family letter once the children have been taught about hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.



Action Steps for Children *(see Materials for Children)*

1. Start a *Clean Hands Club*.
2. Incorporate Activities for Children into daily plan.

Materials for Staff

- Flu Myths and Facts (Handout)
 - The Flu Vaccine (Handout)
 - Simple Handwashing Steps
(Handout)
 - Daily Health Check (Handout)
 - Where to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA
County (Template)
-

Flu Myths and Facts

Myth: The flu vaccine makes you sick.

Fact: You cannot catch the flu from a flu shot. The flu shot is made from “dead” virus. They cannot make you sick. The FluMist™ is safe and approved for flu prevention (the flu viruses are live but weakened). It takes about two weeks after you get your flu vaccine to be protected from getting sick with the flu.

Myth: Flu shots are 100 percent effective in protecting you from getting the flu.

Fact: The flu shot does not protect you from all illnesses and does not give 100 percent protection against the flu, but it can help keep you from getting seriously sick with the flu. It can also help shorten the amount of time you are sick.

Myth: By December, it’s too late to get the flu vaccine.

Fact: Even though the best time to get the flu vaccine is during the fall, getting a flu vaccine in December or later will still help protect you against the flu. Flu season can go on into springtime.

Myth: You can only spread the flu to other people after symptoms start.

Fact: You can also spread the flu virus one to two days before your symptoms appear. Adults can continue to spread

the flu for three to five days after symptoms start. Children can continue to spread the flu for up to seven days after their symptoms start.

Myth: Antibacterial soaps will protect you from getting the flu.

Fact: Strong soaps and hand-gels are not “better” than regular soap and water for getting flu viruses off your hands. Washing your hands well and often is what counts. Washing your hands with regular soap and water will help get rid of the germs and viruses that stick to the oil on your hands.

Myth: If I am healthy and never or rarely get sick, I don’t need to get a flu vaccine.

Fact: Getting a flu vaccine is one of the best ways to protect the people around you, including children, from getting sick. Health experts recommend that anyone who wants to reduce the risk of getting sick with the flu get a flu vaccine every year.

Myth: If I have a cold or the flu, taking antibiotics will make me well.

Fact: Antibiotics will *not* help treat colds or the flu. Call your health care provider if your symptoms are severe or get worse.

Protect Yourself and Others from the Flu

Here are some other ways to keep from getting sick with the flu (and other illnesses, too) or giving the flu to other people:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve—*not* into your hands.
- Teach children to wash their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes, too!
- Stay away from someone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Keep your hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Keep a child home if he or she is sick.

For more information on the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

The Flu Vaccine

The best way to protect yourself, your family, and the children and people you work with from becoming sick with the flu is to get a flu vaccine every year.

Here are important things to remember about flu vaccines:

- All people should get a flu vaccine if they want to reduce the risk of getting sick with the flu.
- A new flu vaccine is needed every year, because the flu virus is always changing.
- Flu shots can't cause the flu (the flu viruses in the shot are dead). Two doses given at least one month apart are recommended for children six months to eight years who are receiving the flu shot for the first time.
- The FluMist™ is safe and approved for flu prevention (the flu viruses are live but weakened). Two doses given at least one month apart are recommended for children aged two to eight years who are receiving the flu shot for the first time. *This vaccine is **not** recommended for pregnant women or others with chronic health conditions.*
- It takes about two weeks after you get your flu shot to be protected from becoming sick with the flu.
- The flu shot does not give 100 percent protection against the flu, but it can keep you from getting seriously sick with the flu.
- If you have never had the flu, you still need to get a flu vaccine every year.

- Flu vaccine is very safe and is given to millions of people every year.
- Some people may be sore after receiving the flu shot for one or two days where they had the shot or have mild flu-like symptoms.

Health experts recommend that anyone who wishes to lower their risk of getting sick with the flu, get a flu vaccine. Getting a flu vaccine will protect you and the people around you including small children, seniors, and people who have weaker immune systems.

Health experts recommend the following groups get a flu vaccine.

These groups are

- children six months to four years of age (they are at higher risk)
- children aged six months up to their 19th birthday
- pregnant women
- people 50 years of age and older
- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

People who care for children (aged six months to five years of age), such as child care workers, should get a flu vaccine, too! Getting a flu vaccine will help protect you from getting sick with the flu. It will also help keep you from spreading flu to others, including the children at the center and their families.

For more information on the flu vaccine, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

Simple Handwashing Steps

1. Wet your hands with warm water.
2. Lather up with soap. Soap removes the oil that helps germs stick to your hands. **Stronger soaps or antibacterial soaps are not “better” than regular soap for getting flu germs off your hands.** What matters is washing your hands correctly. The best soap is the soap you actually use!
3. Rub and scrub your hand together for at least 20 seconds. Strongly rub and scrub your wrists, palms, between fingers, under your nails, and the backs of your hands. It’s the soap and scrubbing action that loosens the germs off your hands and sends them down the sink when you rinse.
4. Rinse your hands thoroughly with warm, running water.
5. Dry your hands completely with a clean towel. If you’re using paper towels, you may want to use the towel to turn off the faucet when you’re finished drying your hands. Throw the paper towel away.



If soap and water are not available or convenient, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. **(Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not “better” than regular soap and water for getting flu germs off your hands. You don’t need to kill all the germs and viruses on your hands. You just need to wash them off.)** Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can usually be found as a gel or as wipes. Make sure the product is at least 60 percent alcohol.

To use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Rub the gel or wipe all over both hands.
- Rub hands together until they feel dry.

Remember to keep all alcohol-based and hand-gel sanitizers out of the reach of small children. Always supervise children when using hand-gel so that they do not put it in their eyes or mouth.

Daily Health Check

Checking children's health on a daily basis can help prevent the spread of illness, especially during flu season or a flu pandemic. A simple health check usually takes less than a minute.

I. Listen

When you greet the child ask how he or she is. Also ask the parent/guardian how the child is doing.

- Listen to what the child and parent/guardian tell you about how the child is feeling.
- If the child can talk, listen for complaints. Is the child hoarse or wheezing? Is he or she coughing, breathing fast, or having difficulty breathing?

Also ask about any illness in the family. This will alert you to the possibility the child may become sick in a day or two and may be contagious.

2. Look

Get down to the child's level to see her clearly. Look for signs of health or illness.

- Is the child's behavior unusual for this time of day? Is the child clinging to the parent, acting cranky, crying, or fussing?
- Does the child appear listless, in pain, or moving with difficulty?
- Does the child look pale or flushed?
- Does the child feel hot to the touch?
- Does the child have a rash, sores, swelling, or bruising? Is the child scratching the skin or scalp?
- Do the child's eyes look red, crusty, goopy, or watery?
- Does the child have a runny nose? Or is the child pulling at the ears?
- Does the child have mouth sores, drool excessively, or swallow with difficulty?

If a child is sick and should not be around others, call the child's parents or guardian. It is important to have updated contact information for anyone who is authorized to take a child away from the center. Until the parent or guardian arrives, keep the child in a comfortable place that has been set aside for sick children and away from other children.

Where to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA County

Flu vaccine clinics that offer free or low-cost flu vaccines are held in many locations throughout Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County Public Health Clinics, community outreach clinics, drug stores, and pharmacies are examples of places where flu vaccine clinics are held. If you have health insurance, call your health care provider to get a flu vaccine.

You can use these two online sources to find out where flu vaccine clinics are located in each part of Los Angeles County:

- www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
- www.findaflushot.com

The findaflushot Website will help you to find a flu vaccine clinic in your area, by entering your zip code.

You can also dial 2-1-1 (TTY: 1-800-660-4026) on your telephone to find out where to get a flu vaccine in Los Angeles County. Formerly INFO LINE Los Angeles, this telephone number will connect you with a live information specialist 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Information specialists can provide you with confidential information and referrals to non-emergency services.

Flu vaccines are offered during flu season usually beginning in October through early Spring.

The closest flu vaccine clinic from where I live is _____

The closest flu vaccine clinic from where I work is _____

Community clinics supported by the Los Angeles Department of Public Health are located throughout Los Angeles County. Find the one closest to you and call for information on how to get a flu vaccine.

Where to Go to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA County, continued

Where to Go to Get a Flu Vaccine			
County Public Health Centers			
www.publichealth.lacounty.gov - www.findaflushot.org - LA County Referral Number 2-1-1			
Agency	Address	Telephone No.	Notes
Antelope Valley	335-B Avenue K-6 Lancaster, CA 93535	(661) 723-4526	
Central	241 N. Figueroa St. LA, CA 90012	(213) 240-8204	
Curtis Tucker	123 W. Manchester Blvd. Inglewood, CA 90301	(310) 419-5325	
Glendale	501 N. Glendale Ave. Glendale, CA 91206	(818) 500-5750	
Hollywood/Wilshire	5205 Melrose Ave. LA, CA 90038	(323) 769-7800	
Monrovia	330 W. Maple Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016	(626) 256-1600	
Pacoima	13300 Van Nuys Blvd. Pacoima, CA 91331	(818) 896-1903	
Pomona	750 S. Park Ave. Pomona, CA 91766	(909) 868-0235	
South	1522 E. 102nd St. LA, CA 90002	(323) 563-4053	
Torrance	711 Del Amo Blvd. Torrance, CA 90502	(310) 354-2300	
Whittier HC	7643 S. Painter Ave. Whittier, CA 90602	(562) 464-5350	
Pharmacies/Drug Stores/Grocery			
Name	Address	Telephone No.	Notes

Materials for Families

- Flu Myths and Facts (Handout)
 - The Flu Vaccine (Handout)
 - Who Should Get the Flu Vaccine?
(Survey)
 - Where to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA
County (Handout)
 - What I Learned Today (Letter)
-



Flu Myths and Facts

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Myth: If I have a cold or the flu, taking antibiotics will make me well.

Fact: Antibiotics will *not* help treat colds or the flu. Call your health care provider if your symptoms are severe or get worse.

Protect Yourself and Others from the Flu

Here are some other ways to keep from getting sick with the flu (and other illnesses, too) or giving the flu to other people:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve—not into your hands.
- Teach children to wash their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes, too!
- Stay away from someone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Keep your hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Keep a child home if he or she is sick.

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- If you have never had the flu, you still need to get a flu vaccine every year.

- Flu vaccine is very safe and is given to millions of people every year.
- Some people may be sore after receiving the flu shot for one or two days where they had the shot or have mild flu-like symptoms.

Health experts recommend that anyone who wishes to lower their risk of getting sick with the flu, get a flu vaccine. Getting a flu vaccine will protect you and the people around you including small children, seniors, and people who have weaker immune systems.

Health experts recommend the following groups get a flu vaccine.

These groups are:

- children six months to four years of age (they are at higher risk)
- children aged six months up to their 19th birthday
- pregnant women
- people 50 years of age and older
- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

People who care for children (aged six months to five years of age), such as child care workers, should get a flu vaccine, too! Getting a flu vaccine will help protect you from getting sick with the flu. It will also help keep you from spreading flu to others, including the children at the center and their families.

For more information on the flu vaccine, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

Who Should Get the Flu Vaccine?

Even if you are healthy and don't get sick, you may need to get a flu vaccine every year. If you can check just one box below, you should get a flu vaccine this flu season! Getting a flu vaccine every year is the best way to protect yourself, your children, your family, and friends from getting sick with the flu.

Health experts recommend the following groups get a flu vaccine.

- children six months to four years of age (they are at higher risk)
- children aged six months up to their 19th birthday
- pregnant women
- people 50 years of age and older
- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu
- people who care for children



Did you check at least one box?

Getting a flu vaccine will protect you and the people around you; including small children, seniors, and people with weakened immune systems.

Where to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA County

Flu vaccine clinics that offer free or low-cost flu vaccines are held in many locations throughout Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County Public Health Clinics, community outreach clinics, drug stores, and pharmacies are examples of places where flu vaccine clinics are held. If you have health insurance, call your health care provider to get a flu vaccine.

You can use these two online sources to find out where flu vaccine clinics are located in each part of Los Angeles County:

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The closest flu vaccine clinic from where I live is _____

The closest flu vaccine clinic from where I work is _____

Community clinics supported by the Los Angeles Department of Public Health are located throughout Los Angeles County. Find the one closest to you and call for information on how to get a flu vaccine.

Where to Go to Get a Flu Vaccine in LA County, continued

Where to Go to Get a Flu Vaccine			
County Public Health Centers			
www.publichealth.lacounty.gov - www.findaflushot.org - LA County Referral Number 2-1-1			
Agency	Address	Telephone No.	Notes
Antelope Valley	335-B Avenue K-6 Lancaster, CA 93535	(661) 723-4526	
Central	241 N. Figueroa St. LA, CA 90012	(213) 240-8204	
Curtis Tucker	123 W. Manchester Blvd. Inglewood, CA 90301	(310) 419-5325	
Glendale	501 N. Glendale Ave. Glendale, CA 91206	(818) 500-5750	
Hollywood/Wilshire	5205 Melrose Ave. LA, CA 90038	(323) 769-7800	
Monrovia	330 W. Maple Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016	(626) 256-1600	
Pacoima	13300 Van Nuys Blvd. Pacoima, CA 91331	(818) 896-1903	
Pomona	750 S. Park Ave. Pomona, CA 91766	(909) 868-0235	
South	1522 E. 102nd St. LA, CA 90002	(323) 563-4053	
Torrance	711 Del Amo Blvd. Torrance, CA 90502	(310) 354-2300	
Whittier HC	7643 S. Painter Ave. Whittier, CA 90602	(562) 464-5350	
Pharmacies/Drug Stores/Grocery			
Name	Address	Telephone No.	Notes



What I Learned Today

Dear Family:

Today your child learned about how germs are spread, how to wash hands correctly, and how to cover coughs and sneezes. Children who wash their hands well and often, and who cover their coughs and sneezes, are less likely to get sick with the flu. And they are also less likely to spread illness to others.

Please take the time to look at your child's activity sheets. Use this time to talk with your child about what he or she learned today. Also, please ask your child to **show** you what he or she learned today! You will both have fun.

One of the activity sheets your child brought home today is the **Clean Hands Club Weekly Hand Washing Chart for Home**. Please use this chart to have your child wash his or her hands often. Please consider hanging this activity sheet near a kitchen or bathroom sink. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Activities for Children

Distribute these activities for children to center staff and to families.

- Activity 1: Clean Your Hands!

- Wash Your Hands Well! (Coloring Page)
- Germs Are All Over! (Coloring Page)
- I Feel Sick (Coloring Page)
- What's on My Hands? (Coloring Page)
- When to Wash My Hands (Coloring Page)



- What's on Your Hands? (Fun Page)
- What's on Your Hands? (Answer Key)



- Stop those Germs! Word Search (Fun Page)
- Stop those Germs! Word Search (Answer Key)

- Clean Hands Club*: Certificate, Weekly Charts (one for the home, one for the center), Coloring Page

- Activity 2: Cover Your Cough and Sneeze!

- Cough and Sneeze into Your Sleeve! (Coloring Page)
- Cover Your Cough and Sneeze! (Coloring Page)



Note: Activities marked with a book icon are appropriate for children who can read.



Activity 1: Clean Your Hands!

Activity Objectives:

Children will be able to:

- Explain how cold and flu germs are spread.
- Demonstrate how to wash hands properly to prevent the spread of germs.

Materials and Preparation:

Have:

- spray bottle filled with water (you may want to add food coloring for effect)
- crayons or colored markers
- a sink with warm water on tap (if available)
- hand soap
- paper towels
- alcohol-based hand sanitizer gel (if sink is unavailable)

Copy activity pages (one for each student):



Note: Activities marked with this icon are intended for children who can already read.

- **Wash Your Hands Well!** (coloring page)
- **Germs Are All Over!** (coloring page)
- **I Feel Sick** (coloring page)
- **What's on My Hands?** (coloring page)

- **When to Wash My Hands** (coloring page)
- **What's on Your Hands?** (fun page) 
- **Stop those Germs! Word Search** (fun page) 
- **Clean Hands Club** (coloring page)
- **Clean Hands Club Certificate**
- **Clean Hands Club Weekly Chart**
- **Clean Hands Club Weekly Chart for Home** (make several copies for each child to take home)

Prepare:

Display the CDC *Cover Your Cough* poster on hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes (and any other educational graphics on infection control) in the classroom. Download this free poster from www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm

Activity Steps

I. Discuss Germs

Let students know that they are going to learn about germs. Explain that germs are organisms that are so tiny that we cannot see them with our eyes; we need a microscope to see them. Germs are everywhere. Germs can make us sick, and they can spread from one person to another.

Explain that one way germs spread is by coughing and sneezing. This is especially true of the germs that cause colds and the flu. When someone next to you sneezes or coughs, droplets of mucus (the wet, slimy stuff inside the nose) land on you.

You can also get the flu when you touch a surface that has flu virus on it, and then touch your face. Explain that the germs that cause colds and the flu usually get into our bodies through the eyes, nose, and mouth. Emphasize that even though we can't see them, germs can be anywhere (such as a desktop, doorknob, crayon, toy, faucet handle, etc.).

2. Demonstrate how germs are spread.

Materials: spray bottle filled with water

Use the spray bottle filled with water to demonstrate a sneeze. Pretending that you are sneezing, spray water from the bottle onto your hand. Show your wet hand to the children. Then put your wet hand on a surface that children and staff are likely to touch, such as a table, doorknob, or toy.

Have another staff member (or a child) put his or her hand on the wet spot. Then ask that person to touch his or her face (for example, rubbing the eyes, putting a finger to the mouth, or scratching the nose).

Explain that germs have now entered the body of the person who just touched his or her face.

3. Discuss when it is important to wash your hands.

Remind children often that keeping their hands clean is one of the easiest and best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Explain that it is very important for them to wash their hands:

- before eating
- after using the toilet
- after coughing or sneezing or blowing their nose
- after playing outside
- whenever their hands are dirty

4. Demonstrate proper hand washing.

Explain to children that when they are washing their hands it is important to make sure they get their hands *clean*.

Demonstrate proper hand washing:

- Wet your hands with clean, warm water.
- Add soap.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather.

- Scrub all of your hand surfaces thoroughly, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers, and under your fingernails.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, singing the Happy Birthday! song twice. Children can also choose a different song or a rhyme that takes 20 seconds to sing or recite.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands completely with a paper towel.
- Turn off the faucet, using the paper towel. (This prevents coming in contact with any germs that may have been on your hands when you turned the faucet on.)

5. Children complete activity pages.

Activity Pages:

Wash Your Hands Well! (coloring page)

Germs Are All Over! (coloring page)

I Feel Sick (coloring page)

What's on My Hands? (coloring page)

When to Wash My Hands (coloring page)

What's on Your Hands? (fun page) 

Stop those Germs! Word Search (fun page) 

Answer Keys: **What's on Your Hands? Stop those Germs!**

Distribute the crayons or colored markers and the activity pages. Review the pages with the children and answer any questions they may have about the activities.

Tell the children to complete the pages while you call up small groups of children to practice washing their hands.

6. Children practice proper hand washing.

Call small groups of children to the sink. Have each child take a turn washing his or her hands, guiding them in proper hand washing steps. Sing the Happy Birthday song twice while each child scrubs. (Or choose a different song or a rhyme that takes 20 seconds to sing or recite.) Once each child has washed his or her hands, have the child return to the desk to continue working on the activity pages.

If a sink is not available, demonstrate the proper use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Apply the gel to the palm of one hand.
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

Then have children practice.

Remember to keep all hand-gel and alcohol-based sanitizers out of the reach of small children. Always supervise children when they are using hand-gel so they do not put it in their eyes or mouth.

7. Start a Clean Hands Club.

(Note: This can be an ongoing activity or one that you do several times a year, especially during the flu season or a flu pandemic.)

Fun Sheets:

Clean Hands Club Coloring Page

Clean Hands Club Certificate

Clean Hands Club Weekly Chart

Clean Hands Club Weekly Hand Washing Chart for Home

Sign the *Clean Hands Club Certificate* in the space provided for the staff signature.

Explain that your center is starting a *Clean Hands Club*. As part of the club, each child will pledge to wash his or her hands often and properly. Have each child say the pledge. Distribute the certificates and have each child write his or her name in the space provided. The certificates are for the children to take home and share with their families.

Show the *Clean Hands Club Weekly Chart*. Explain that every time the children wash their hands before or after an activity, a brightly colored sticker will be placed in the matching space in their *Clean Hands Club Weekly Chart*.

Show the *Clean Hands Club Weekly Hand Washing Chart for Home*. Explain that this chart will go home with them. Encourage children to share the *Clean Hands Club Weekly Chart for Home* with their families and to demonstrate what they learned today. Have children ask their



parents or guardians to help them remember to wash their hands often and properly, and to fill in the chart each day.

Show the *Clean Hands Club* Coloring Page. Have children draw themselves. (You may want to create a drawing of yourself beforehand, approximating your hair color and length, eye color, nose shape, etc., to show to children as an example.)

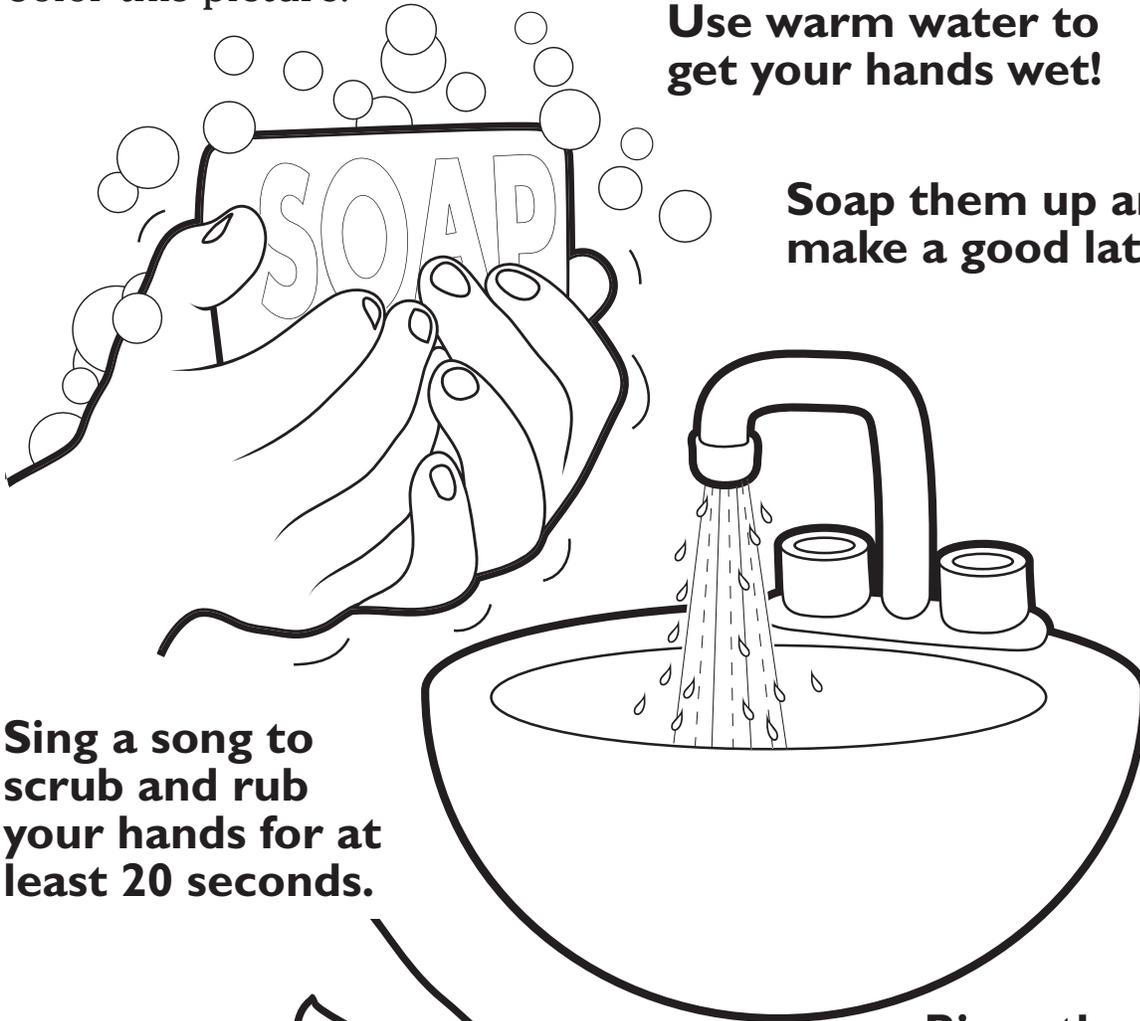


Wash Your Hands Well!

Color this picture.

Use warm water to get your hands wet!

Soap them up and make a good lather.



Sing a song to scrub and rub your hands for at least 20 seconds.

Rinse those germs away.

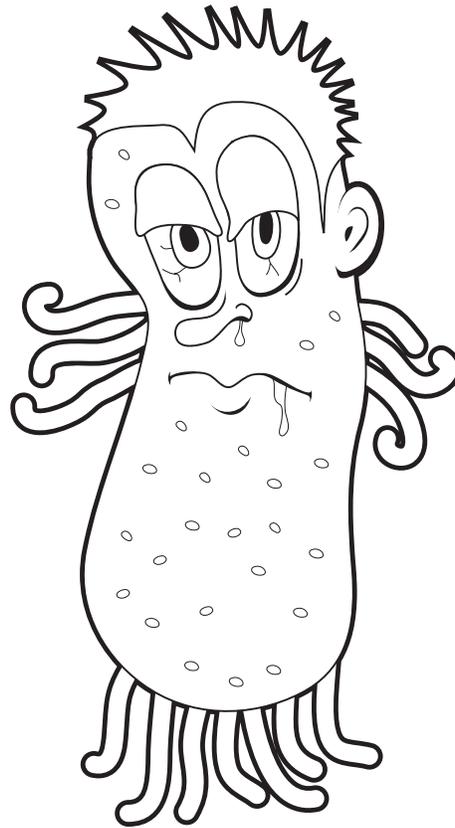


Dry your hands well with a clean paper towel.



Germs Are All Over!

Color this picture.

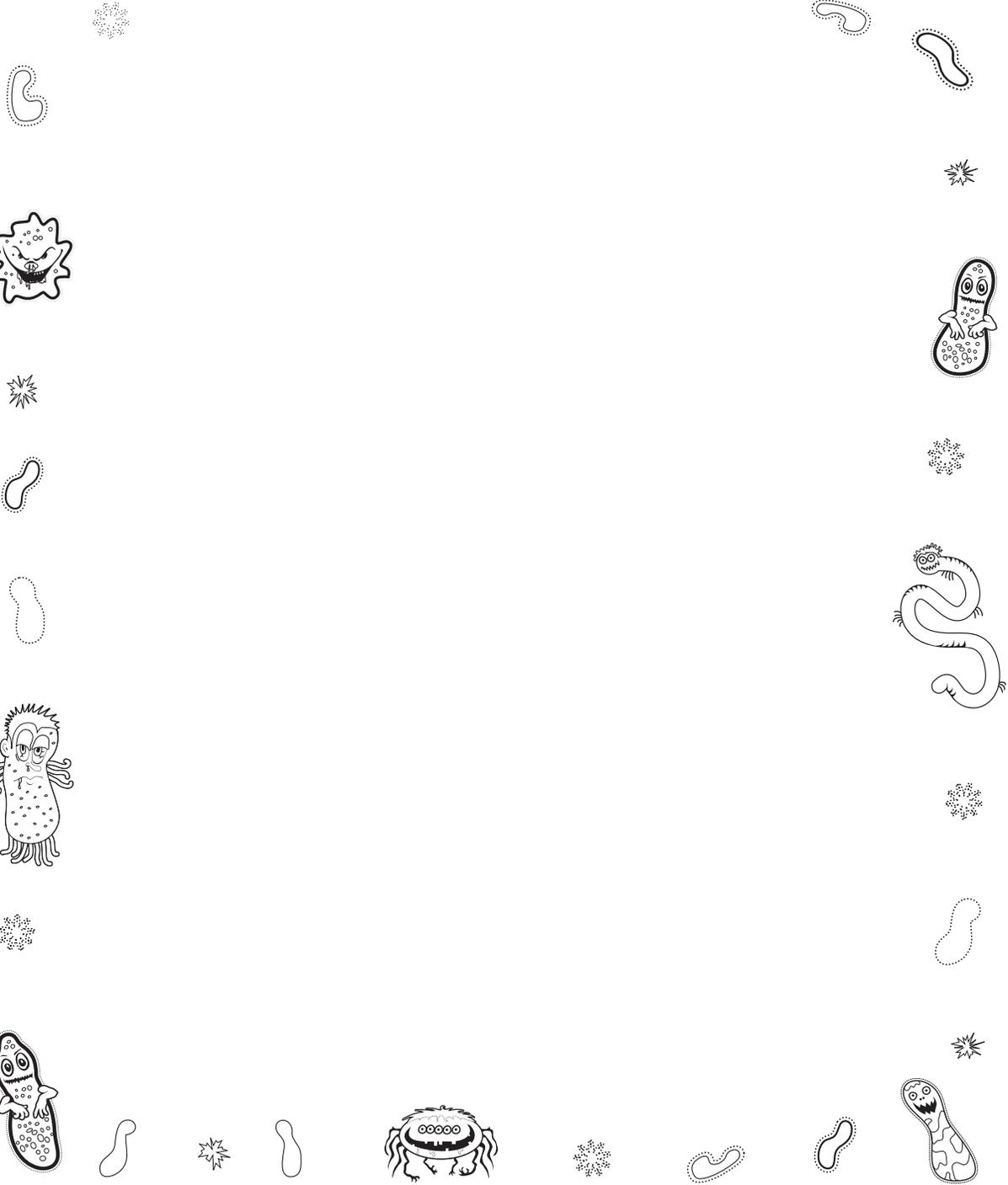


Now draw your own germ.



I Feel Sick

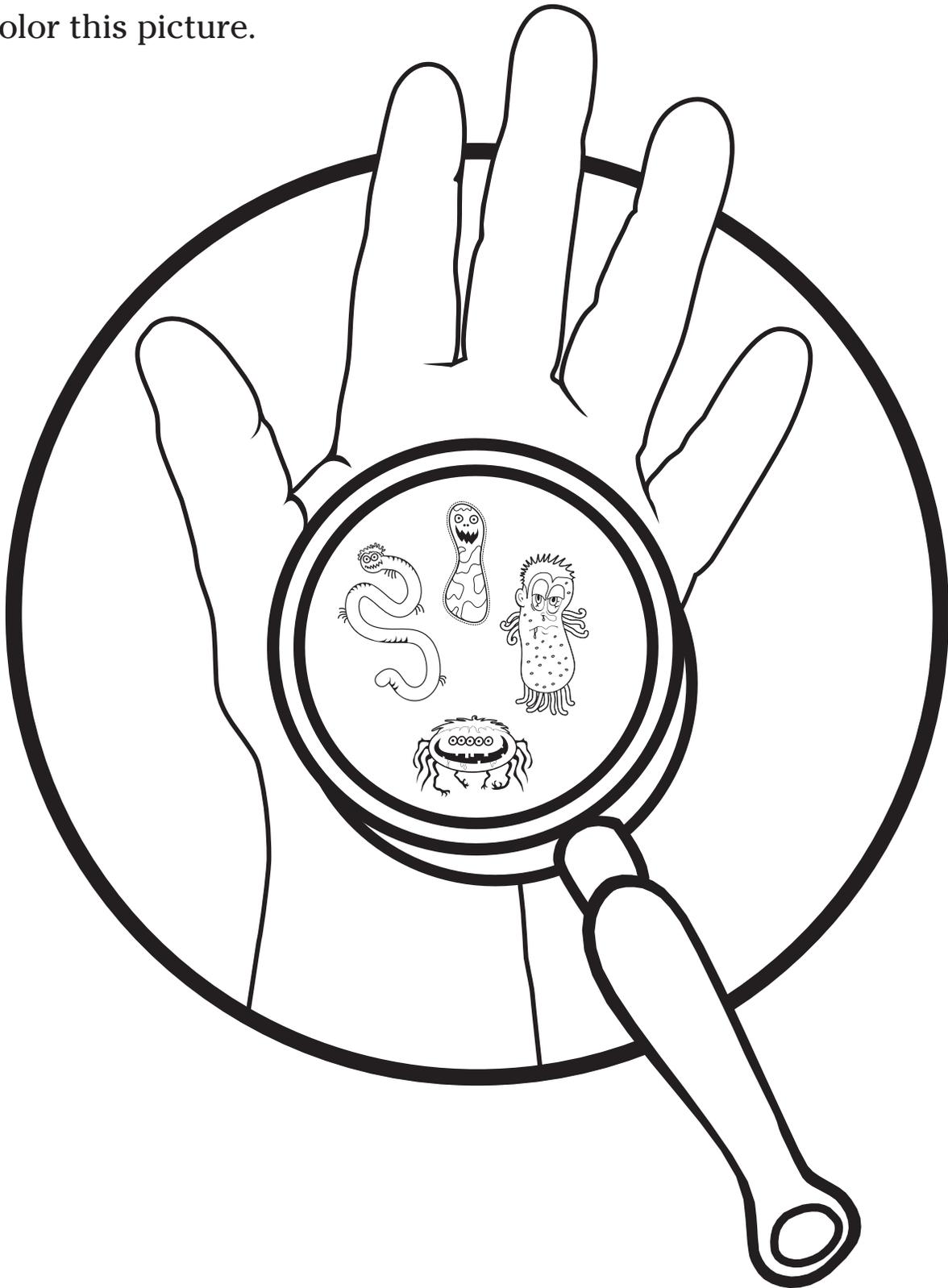
Create a drawing of yourself showing how you look when you feel sick.





What's on My Hand?

Color this picture.





When to Wash My Hands

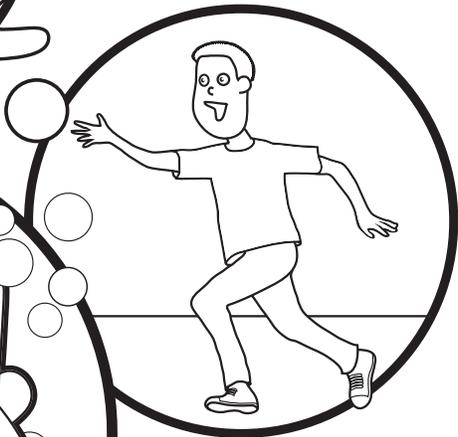
Color this picture.

I always wash my hands:

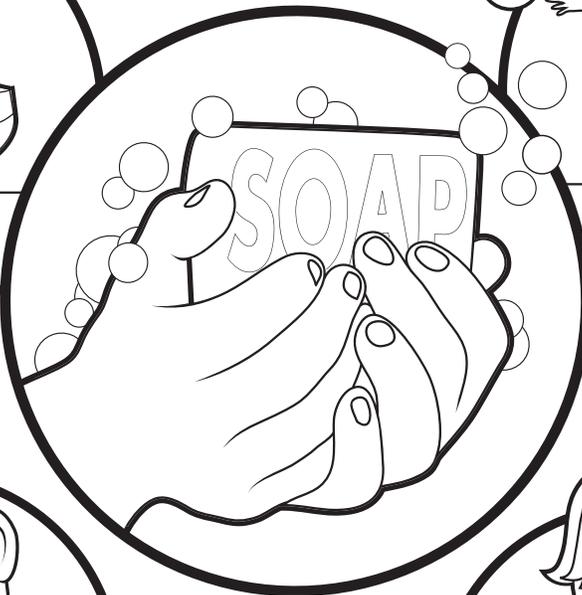
**after using
the toilet**



**whenever they
are dirty!**



**after playing
outside**



after coughing or sneezing



before eating

What's on Your Hands?

Directions: Fill in the spaces with the correct word from the Word Bank.

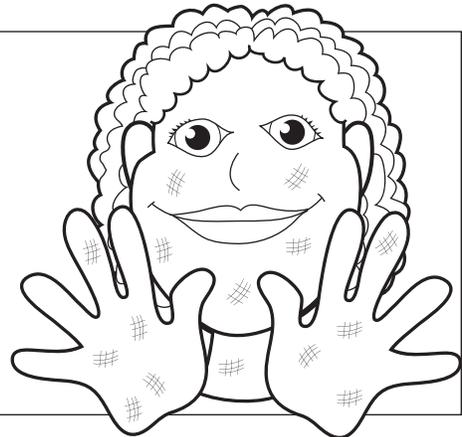
_____ are everywhere. Germs are so _____ you can't see them. Germs can make you _____. Germs can _____ from one person to another. Germs are found in coughs and _____. You can get rid of germs by _____ your hands.

I should always wash my hands _____ I eat. I should always wash my hands after I go to the _____.

I should wash my hands for at least _____ seconds. One way to be sure I have washed my hands long enough is to sing the _____ song _____ times.

Word Bank:

20	Happy	sneezes
before	Birthday!	spread
bathroom	sick	two
Germs	small	washing



What's on Your Hands? Answer Key

Directions: Fill in the spaces with the correct word from the Word Bank.

Germs are everywhere. Germs are so **small** you can't see them.

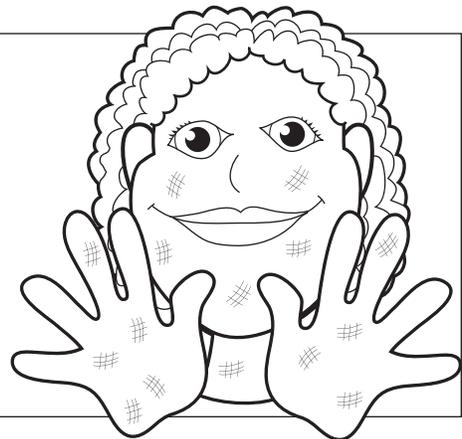
Germ

s can make you **sick**. Germs can **spread** from one person to another. Germs are found in coughs and **sneezes**. You can get rid of germs by **washing** your hands.

I should always wash my hands **before** I eat. I should always wash my hands after I go to the **bathroom**. I should wash my hands for at least **20** seconds. One way to be sure I have washed my hands long enough is to sing the **Happy Birthday!** song **two** times.

Word Bank:

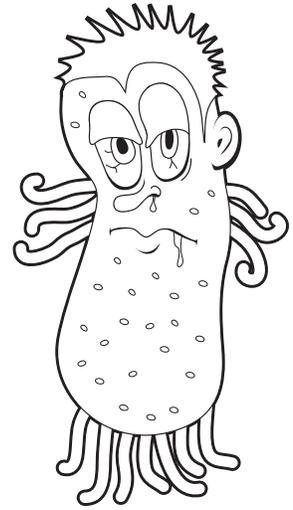
20	Happy Birthday!	sneezes
before	sick	spread
bathroom	small	two
Germs		washing



Stop those Germs! Word Search

Directions: Can you find these words hidden among the letters?

- GERM
- FLU
- SPREAD
- CLEAN
- SOAP
- WATER
- HANDS

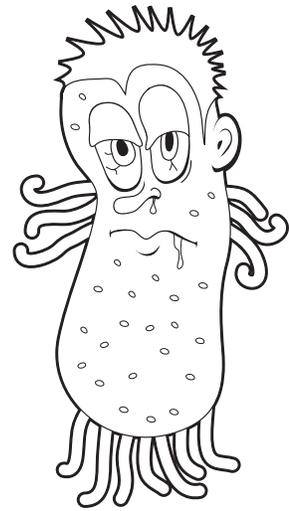


A	F	G	W	A	S	H	B	L	K
Z	I	E	Z	M	U	V	D	O	R
T	O	R	A	W	A	T	E	R	N
I	E	M	D	F	I	O	U	Q	T
K	M	S	A	E	J	S	A	H	E
O	J	B	P	K	C	L	E	A	N
F	L	U	D	R	D	A	S	N	V
E	A	C	I	O	E	L	J	D	U
S	O	A	P	K	U	A	M	S	A
C	A	Z	L	I	L	K	D	E	Y

Stop those Germs! Word Search Answer Key

Directions: Can you find these words hidden among the letters?

GERM FLU SPREAD
 CLEAN SOAP WATER
 HANDS

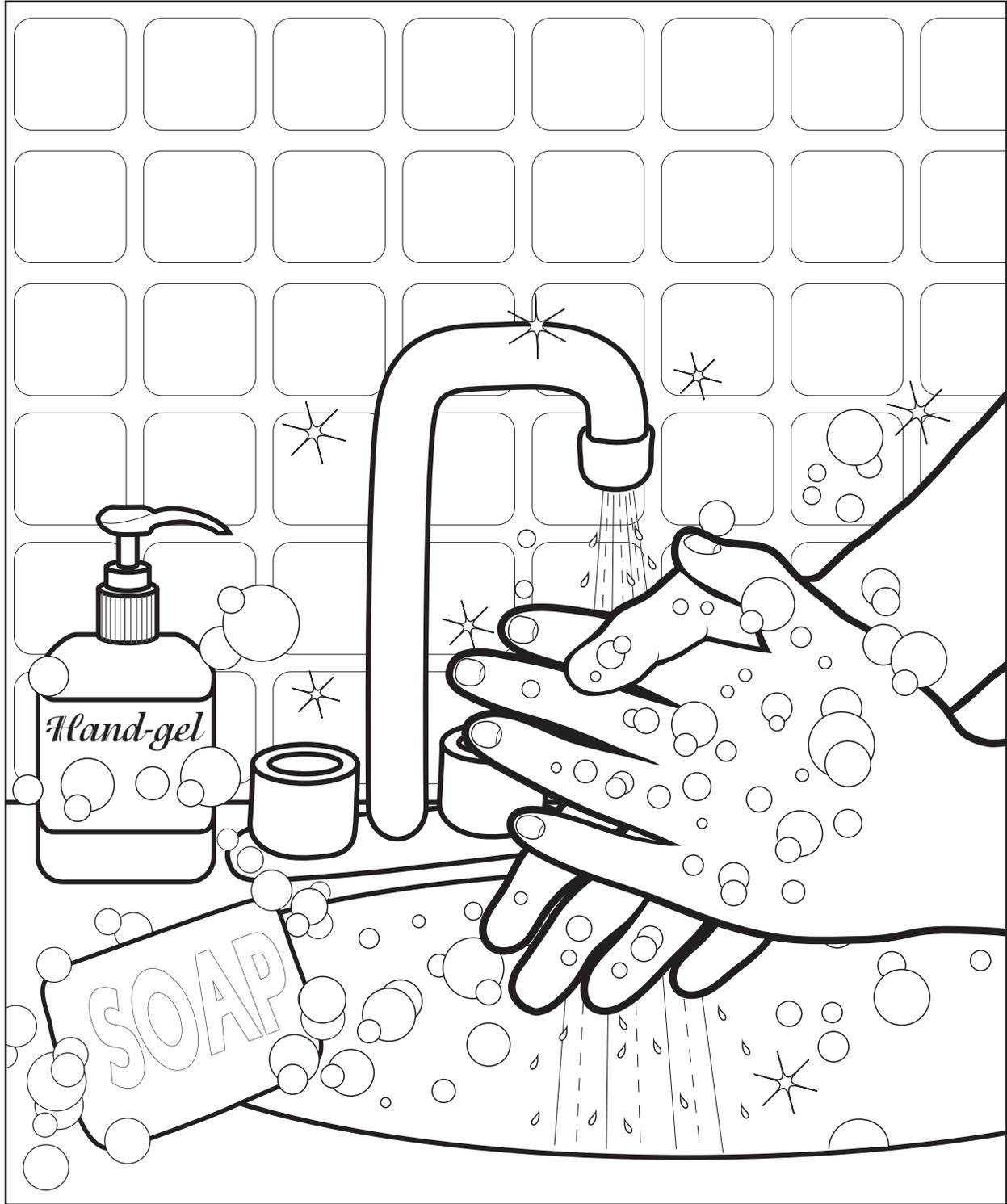


A	F	G	W	A	S	H	B	L	K
Z	I	E	Z	M	U	V	D	O	R
T	O	R	A	W	A	T	E	R	N
I	E	M	D	F	I	O	U	Q	T
K	M	S	A	E	J	S	A	H	E
O	J	B	P	K	C	L	E	A	N
F	L	U	D	R	D	A	S	N	V
E	A	C	I	O	E	L	J	D	U
S	O	A	P	K	U	A	M	S	A
C	A	Z	L	I	L	K	D	E	Y



Clean Hands Club Coloring Page

Color this picture.



The Clean Hands Club Certificate

I belong to the *Clean Hands Club!* I know the proper way to wash my hands and I pledge to wash my hands with soap and water often!

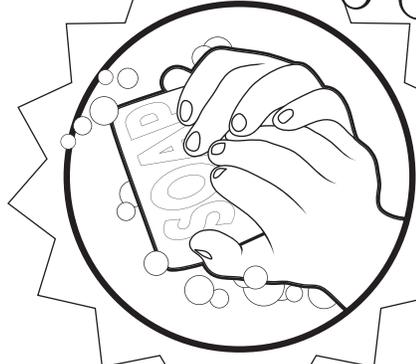
I know that washing my hands properly will help keep me healthy.

I also know that washing my hands often will help stop germs from spreading.

As part of my pledge, I will fill out my *Clean Hands Club Weekly Hand Washing Chart* for Home. (Or I will ask my parent or my guardian to help me fill it out.)

Child's name: _____

Child care staff: _____





Child's Name _____ Week of _____

Clean Hands Club Weekly Chart

Directions: Use this chart to ensure each child washes his or her hands often. Put brightly colored stickers in the spaces to show when a child has washed his or her hands. Display the chart in the classroom.

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arriving at child care					
After going to the bathroom					
After I sneeze or cough					
Before snack					
After playtime					
After lunch					
Before lunch					
After playing					
Before going home					

Child's Name _____ Week of _____



Clean Hands Club Weekly Hand Washing Chart for Home



Day	Activity							
	Before breakfast	After using the toilet	After I sneeze or cough	Before lunch	After playtime	When I get home	Before dinner	Whenever my hands are dirty
Monday								
Tuesday								
Wednesday								
Thursday								
Friday								
Saturday								
Sunday								



Activity 2: Cover Your Cough and Sneeze!

Activity Objectives:

Children will be able to:

- Explain how cold and flu germs are spread.
- Demonstrate how to cover a cough or sneeze properly to prevent the spread of germs.

Materials and Preparation:

Have:

- spray bottle filled with water (you may want to add food coloring for effect)
- box of white tissue
- crayons
- a sink with warm water on tap (if available)
- hand soap
- paper towels
- alcohol-based hand sanitizer: gel or wipes (optional)

Copy activity pages (one for each student):

- **Cough and Sneeze into your Sleeve!** (coloring page)
- **Cover Your Cough or Sneeze!** (coloring page)

Prepare:

Display the CDC *Cover Your Cough* poster on hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes (and any other educational graphics on infection control) in the classroom. Download this free poster from www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm.

Activity Steps

1. Review how germs are spread.

Materials: spray bottle with colored water

Ask children what they remember from Activity 1. Be sure to highlight these key points:

- Germs are everywhere.
- Germs are so small you can't see them.
- Germs can make you sick.
- Germs can spread from one person to another.
- Germs are found in coughs and sneezes.
- You can get rid of germs by washing your hands.
- Germs can easily get into your body through your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- It is important to keep your hands away from your face.

Remind children that germs are easily spread when we cough or sneeze into our hands and then touch someone or something else.

Using the bottle of colored water, spray some water onto your hands. Ask the children to pretend that when you spray the water, you are actually sneezing germs onto your hand. Spray your hand again, making a loud sneezing or coughing sound.

Touch the desk or another surface. Now “germs” are on the desk. Remind children that if someone else touches the desk, the germs will get onto that person, too. This is one way that germs spread and make other people sick.

2. Demonstrate how to properly cover coughs and sneezes.

Materials: spray bottle, box of white tissue

Let children know that there are things we can do to prevent germs from spreading this way. Ask, “What would happen if I covered up my cough or sneeze so my germs don’t spread?” (Not as many people would get sick.)

Point out that we don’t always have tissue with us when we need to cough or sneeze. So what should we do then? Tell children that when they need to cough or sneeze and they don’t have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their elbow or sleeve. Have them imagine they are wearing a cape and are hiding their face.

Demonstrate how to cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow or sleeve. Explain that this is another good way to prevent the spread of germs.

Use the spray bottle to demonstrate how to cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve. Show the children how the germs are on your elbow or sleeve and not on your hands and other surfaces. Next continue the demonstration by taping a tissue over the nozzle. Put your hand in front of the spray bottle and spray, pretending to sneeze as you do. Show the palm of your hand to the children. Ask the children, “Did germs get on my hand? Where did the germs go?” Hold up the tissue and show the colored tissue to the children. Point out that the germs went into the tissue instead of your hand. Emphasize that covering a sneeze with your elbow or sleeve or using a tissue are ways to help prevent the spread of germs.

Throw the tissue into the wastebasket. Explain that germs can live on the tissue for many hours after a person sneezes, so it is very important to properly dispose of used tissue right away.

3. Children practice covering their coughs and sneezes.

Point out where tissue is kept both in the classroom and other areas of the center, then pass out tissues to the children. Have children pretend to cough and sneeze, practicing using tissues to cover their mouths and noses.

Go around the room helping children use tissues to properly cover their coughs and sneezes. Remind children to throw away their tissues into a wastebasket as soon as they have finished coughing or sneezing.

Also remind children about the importance of getting rid of germs by washing their hands. Explain that even though a tissue will catch most of the germs from a cough or sneeze, some germs might still get on their hands.

Break the classroom into small groups of children to wash their hands and practice coughing or sneezing into the crook of their elbows or sleeves. While the children in one group are washing their hands, have the other groups of children practice coughing or sneezing into the crook of their elbows or sleeves. (Have another staff person go around the room helping children, as necessary.)

If your classroom does not have a sink, have children use hand sanitizer to clean their hands. Always supervise children when they are using hand-gel so they do not get it in their eyes or mouth.

4. Students complete activity pages.

Fun Pages:

Cough and Sneeze into Your Sleeve! Cover Your Cough or Sneeze!

Materials: crayons, colored markers

Pass out the activity pages and have children color them in.

Ask for two children to share their drawings. Use this opportunity to reinforce the key messages of the lesson.

- If you don't have a tissue, use the crook of your elbow or sleeve—*not* your hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Then throw the tissue away in a wastebasket.
- Wash your hands after you cough or sneeze.

Hang a copy of the activity pages near the classroom tissue supply to remind children to use the tissues.



Cough and Sneeze into Your Sleeve!

Color this picture.

Don't have a tissue? Sneeze into your sleeve!



Cover Your Cough or Sneeze!

Color this picture.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue.

Throw your tissue into a wastebasket.



Fill in the blanks.

Now

your



Chapter 4

During an Outbreak

During a flu pandemic and during regular flu season, many people may get sick with the flu. It's possible to be sick with the flu before you know it. Children and staff who have the flu, but don't yet have signs (symptoms) of illness, may come to the center. Children and staff also may get sick suddenly during the day. Because staff and children play and interact all day, flu could spread easily and quickly.

During a pandemic, it may also be hard to get a doctor's appointment, go to a clinic, or even be seen in a hospital emergency room. And drugs to treat the flu may be in short supply. So, most people who have the flu may need to be cared for at home by a member of the household.

The information in this chapter will help you:

- Decide when to send a staff member or child home.
- Take more steps to limit the spread of flu virus.
- Take care of yourself or a family member who is sick with the flu (home care).
- Understand other steps public health officials may request to help limit the spread of flu.

The information in this chapter will also help you inform families about:

- signs of the flu
- when to keep their children home if sick
- center closure and how you will contact them when you reopen
- how to take care of themselves and their children if they are sick (home care)
- steps public health officials may request to help limit the spread of flu

When should I send a sick child or staff member home?

During a flu season and, especially, during a flu pandemic, it will be important to check all children and staff for any signs of illness. Flu is easily spread from person to person. Signs that a person is sick with the flu often appear suddenly.

- Use the **Daily Health Check** from Chapter 3 several times a day to monitor children and staff for signs of illness.
- Send a child or staff member home if he or she has a fever or if one of the following symptoms is severe:
 - cough
 - sore throat
 - headache
 - muscle ache
- Use the **Daily Sick Log** at the end of this chapter to track illnesses at the center.

What Is Home Care?

During a pandemic, many people who have the flu may not need to see a doctor and will be able to get better at home. This is called *home care*. People who live alone may need to take care of themselves. If you live alone and become sick during a flu pandemic, stay in touch with others by phone or e-mail and ask for help if needed.

How do I provide home care for someone who has the flu?

Many people may get better on their own when they stay home, rest, and take over-the-counter medicine (medicine you can buy without a doctor's prescription). Antibiotics do not help treat the flu. Some people may have antiviral medication prescribed by a doctor. Help someone who is sick with the flu to be as comfortable as possible.

To limit the spread of illness as you care for someone who has the flu:

- Keep the sick person in a separate room, if you can. If that's not possible, try to keep the sick person away from others in the house.
- Open windows occasionally, if possible, to let air flow through the room.
- Select one person in the household to take care of someone who is home with the flu. (The caretaker should be the only person to go in and out of the room with meals, drinks, medicines, etc.)
- Limit contact between someone who is sick and other people in the house. (Someone who is sick should not have any visitors until he or she recovers.)
- Use a labeled household disinfectant or a chlorine bleach mixture every day to keep common surfaces and objects clean and disinfected. (For example, clean the surfaces of doorknobs and handles, light switches, microwaves, phones, remote controls, toilet seats and handles, faucets, and toys.)

How to Make Your Own Sanitizing Solution

If you do not have store-bought disinfectants, you can make your own sanitizing solution by mixing 1/4 cup of bleach with one gallon of clean water. Label container, "sanitizer." *Do not use this water for drinking.*



- Always wash your hands *before* and *after* taking care of someone who is sick. (Make sure everyone in your household washes their hands often, too.)
- Use disposable gloves, if you have them, whenever you come in contact with the sick person's body fluids or mucus. For example, when doing the laundry or throwing away used tissues. Throw away gloves after each use. Remember to wash your hands.
- Keep your distance as much as possible and avoid direct and close contact.
- Ask someone who is sick to wear a surgical mask when others are around, especially if he or she is coughing and sneezing. (Surgical masks should be changed and thrown away when they become moist.)
- Have the sick person use a hand-gel to wash his or her hands, if possible, after coughing or sneezing, touching dirty tissues, or removing a surgical mask.
- Do not share items such as eating utensils, cups, computers, phones, pens, clothes, and towels.

How do I treat the flu at home?

The three most important things to do when treating the flu at home are

1. Check for the signs of illness.
2. Give medicine to reduce the symptoms of flu.
3. Give lots of liquids.

1. Keep a log of the signs of illness.

Write down the date, the time, how high the fever is, and any other signs of illness (such as headache).

- Keep track of any medicines taken (date and time and how much medicine).
- If possible, make a new entry when signs of illness change.

2. Reduce the symptoms of flu.

Use over-the-counter medicine (medicine that does not need a doctor's prescription) to reduce fever and pain from headache, body aches, and sore throat.

- Observe your child closely for symptoms of respiratory illness.
- Use ibuprofen (such as Advil™ or Motrin™) or acetaminophen (such as Tylenol™). Be sure to read the directions on the package.
- ***Do not give aspirin to infants, children or teenagers.*** Aspirin can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Antibiotics will not help treat flu or cold viruses. Some people may have antiviral medication prescribed by a doctor.

3. Give lots of liquids.

Begin offering lots of liquids at the first signs someone is sick with the flu. It is very important to give lots of liquids to help prevent dehydration. Dehydration can happen when the body loses too much water from high fever, vomiting (throwing up), or diarrhea (loose, watery stools). Dehydration can be serious, especially in children.

- Offer clear liquids such as water, juice, and clear soups (for example, chicken broth). Popsicles, iced drinks, and ice cubes can also help.
- When someone has high fever, give liquids that contain electrolytes to prevent dehydration (for example, Pedialyte™ and Infalyte™). (See the handout on home care at the end of this chapter for directions on making an electrolyte drink.)

When should I call or seek medical help?

Call your health care provider if your symptoms don't improve or if these signs of illness appear:

- high fever
- dehydration
- seizure (from high fever)
- shaking chills
- coughing that produces thick mucus

- difficulty breathing
- long-term illness (such as heart or lung disease, diabetes, HIV, cancer) gets worse

(People with a long-term illness and women who are pregnant have a higher risk for getting very sick from the flu. They should be in contact with their medical provider during a flu pandemic.)

Call 9-1-1 if you cannot reach your health care provider and you or a member of your household has any of the following signs of illness:

- difficulty breathing or chest pain with each breath
- bluish skin
- stiff neck
- inability to move an arm or leg
- seizure
- crankiness and/or confusion

How Can I Slow the Spread of Flu?

At the start of a flu pandemic, health officials may call for certain actions to slow down the spread of flu. These actions are called social distancing measures. If the spread of flu can be slowed down, it will give our communities some extra time to prepare.

- Public health officials may ask for all people who are sick with the flu to stay home. This is called voluntary isolation.
- They may also ask that anyone who lives with someone who is sick with the flu to stay home too. This is called voluntary quarantine.

Some social distancing measures are used to keep large groups of people from gathering together and spreading illness. To slow the spread of flu, these are some possible things public health officials might do or request:

- Dismiss students from schools.
- Close all home care, child care, and early care centers.

- Cancel all indoor and outdoor events that get large crowds (such as sports events, concerts, parades, and festivals).
- Close some businesses.
- Request that non-urgent meetings be postponed.
- Ask that people stay away from places with crowds (such as community centers, malls, and theaters).
- Request that services be postponed at all places of worship.

How will I stay informed?

It will be important to stay informed during a flu pandemic. Keep up-to-date by listening to radio and television, and reading news stories about pandemic flu. If possible, visit the Websites that follow for updated information about pandemic flu:

- www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
- www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/epo/
- www.pandemicflu.gov

or call 2-1-1 (800) 339-6993 (Los Angeles County Referrals)

Definitions

Outbreak: A sudden increase in the number of people who are sick with a specific disease.

Home Care: Treating someone who has the flu at home, using a member of the household to provide the care.

Social Distancing: Steps public health officials may use to slow the spread of flu. These steps include dismissing students from schools, closing child care centers, closing businesses and/or canceling events.

Voluntary Isolation and Quarantine: Requests from public health officials to keep sick people at home (isolation) and to keep anyone who lives with a sick person at home (quarantine).



Action Steps for Staff *(see Materials for Staff)*

1. Distribute and discuss as needed **Is it a Cold of the Flu?, When to Send a Child or Staff Member Home, When to Stay Home, Home Care for the Flu and What to Expect During a Flu Pandemic.**
2. Institute morning and daily health checks using the **Daily Sick Log.**
3. Use the **Infection Control Checklist** to help limit the spread of flu virus at the center.
4. Communicate with partners you have identified in you pandemic preparedness plan to share information and resources.



Action Steps for Families *(see Materials for Families)*

1. Distribute **Is it a Cold or the Flu?, When to Keep Your Child Home, Home Care for the Flu, and What to Expect During a Flu Pandemic.**
2. If needed, distribute **Center is Open During Pandemic and Center Will Close Letters.**

Materials for Staff

- Is it a Cold or the Flu? (Handout)
 - When to Send a Child or Staff Member Home (Handout)
 - When to Stay Home (Handout)
 - Home Care for the Flu (Handout)
 - What to Expect During a Flu Pandemic (Handout)
 - Infection Control Checklist (Checklist)
 - Daily Sick Log (Checklist)
-

Is it a Cold or the Flu?

The symptoms of colds and the flu are very similar. Usually, symptoms of the flu are more severe and come on suddenly. This chart will help you tell the difference.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
High Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, 100°F–102°F (may be higher in young children) Starts suddenly
Headache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, often severe Starts suddenly
Body Aches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rare or mild 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, often severe Starts suddenly
Tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, can be extreme
Sore Throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, common
Cough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, mild to moderate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, can be severe
Stuffy Nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes

How Can I Protect Myself from Getting Sick with a Cold or the Flu?

The best way to protect yourself, your family, and the people you work with from getting the flu is to make sure you get a flu vaccine every year. Make sure everyone in your family (except infants younger than six months old) gets a flu vaccine, too.

Here are some simple ways to keep from getting sick with a cold or the flu or giving the flu to other people.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water (sing the Happy Birthday song twice as you wash or wash for 20 seconds).
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve if you don't have a tissue. Do not cough or sneeze into your hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Wash your hands afterward.
- Keep your hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth.
- Teach your children or the children you care for to wash their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes, too!
- Keep sick children at home. Children who go to the child care center or school when they are sick can make other children sick too.
- If you are sick, stay home from work, school, or other public places.

For more information on the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

When to Send a Child or Staff Member Home

During a flu pandemic, it will be especially important to check all children and staff for any signs of illness.

Send a child or staff member home if he or she:

- has a fever or if one of the following symptoms is severe:
 - cough
 - sore throat
 - headache
 - muscle ache

Notify the parent/guardian if a child develops a fever and one of the symptoms above. Enter the child's name in the **Daily Sick Log**.

Send the child home, if possible, and advise the parent/guardian to contact the child's doctor. Remind parents/guardians that they should keep a sick child at home and away from the child care setting until the child has been without symptoms, such as fever, for 24 hours.



Home Care for the Flu

During a regular flu season and even during a pandemic, most people may not need to see a doctor and may be able to get better care at home. This is called *home care*.

People who live alone may need to take care of themselves. If you live alone and become sick during a flu pandemic, stay in touch with others by phone or e-mail and ask for help if needed.

Treating the Flu at Home

Many people may get better on their own when they stay home, rest, and take over-the-counter medicine (medicine you can buy without a doctor's prescription). Some people may have antiviral medication prescribed by a doctor. Antibiotics do not help treat the flu. The three most important things to do when treating the flu at home are:

1. Check for the signs of illness.
2. Give medicine to reduce the symptoms of flu.
3. Give lots of liquids.

1. Keep a log of the signs of illness.

Write down the date, the time, how high the fever is, and any other signs of illness (such as headache).

Keep track of any medicines taken (date and time and how much medicine).

If possible, make a new entry when signs of illness change.

2. Reduce the symptoms of flu.

Use over-the-counter medicine (medicine that does not need a doctor's prescription) to reduce fever and pain from headache, body aches, and sore throat.

Use ibuprofen (such as Advil™ or Motrin™) or acetaminophen (such as Tylenol™). Be sure to read the directions on the package.

- **Do not give aspirin to infants, children, or teenagers.** Aspirin can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.

Antibiotics will not help treat flu or cold viruses.

3. Give lots of liquids.

Begin offering lots of liquids at the first signs someone is sick with the flu. It is very important to give lots of liquids to help prevent dehydration. Dehydration can happen when the body loses too much water from high fever, vomiting (throwing up), or diarrhea (loose, watery stools). Dehydration can be serious, especially in children.

Offer clear liquids such as water, juice, and clear soups (for example, chicken broth). Popsicles, iced drinks, and ice cubes can also help.

When someone has high fever, give liquids that contain electrolytes to prevent dehydration (for example, Pedialyte™ and Infalyte™). Electrolytes

Home Care for the Flu, continued

are salts and minerals that control the amount of water in your body. You can find electrolyte drinks at the drug store or grocery store. You can also make your own electrolyte drink for someone who is older than twelve years.

How to Make an Electrolyte Drink

Combine:

- 1 quart of drinking water
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 2 tablespoons of sugar

Mix well until the salt and sugar dissolve. Add lemon juice for flavor, if desired.

(Note: If you don't have baking soda, add another 1/4 teaspoon of salt.)

When to Call or Seek Medical Help

Call your health care provider if these signs of illness appear:

- high fever
- dehydration
- shaking chills
- coughing that produces thick mucus
- difficulty breathing

- long-term illness (such as heart or lung disease, diabetes, HIV, cancer) gets worse

If you have a long-term illness or are pregnant, you have a higher risk for getting very sick from the flu. Contact your medical provider during a pandemic.

When should I call 9-1-1?

Call 9-1-1 if you cannot reach your health care provider and you or a member of your household has any of the following signs of illness:

- difficulty breathing or chest pain with each breath
- bluish skin
- stiff neck
- inability to move an arm or leg
- seizure
- crankiness and/or confusion



Home Care for the Flu, continued

Limit the Spread of Flu Virus

It is important to take extra steps to prevent the spread of flu virus as you care for someone who has the flu. To limit the spread of illness:

- Select one person in the household to take care of someone who is home with the flu. (The caretaker should be the only person to go in and out of the room with meals, drinks, medicines, etc.)
- Keep the sick person in a separate room, if you can. If that's not possible, try to keep the sick person away from others in the house. (Someone who is sick should not have any visitors until he or she recovers.)
- Keep your distance as much as possible and avoid direct and close contact.
- Open windows occasionally, if possible, to let air flow through the room.
- Clean common surfaces and objects every day. (For example, clean doorknobs and handles, light switches, microwaves, phones, remote controls, toilet seats and handles, faucets, and non-fabric toys.) Use a labeled household disinfectant or a chlorine bleach mixture. Use gloves to protect hands from chemicals.

How to Make Your Own Sanitizing Solution

If you do not have store-bought disinfectants, you can make your own sanitizing solution by mixing 1/4 cup of bleach with one gallon of clean water. Label container, "sanitizer." *Do not use this water for drinking.*



- Always wash your hands *before* and *after* taking care of someone who is sick. (Make sure everyone in your household washes their hands often, too.)
- Use disposable gloves, if you have them, whenever you come in contact with the sick person's body fluids or mucus. (For example, when doing laundry or throwing away their tissues.) Throw away gloves after each use. Don't forget to wash hands.
- If possible, ask the sick person to wear a surgical mask when others are close by or if they are coughing and sneezing. (Surgical masks should

Home Care for the Flu, continued

be changed and thrown away when they become moist.)

- Have the sick person use hand-gel to wash his or her hands, if possible, after coughing or sneezing, touching dirty tissues, or removing a surgical mask.
- Do not share items such as eating utensils, cups, computers, phones, pens, clothes, and towels.

Other Things to Do

Help the sick person feel better.

To help the sick person feel better:

- Make him or her as comfortable as possible.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach.
- Offer favorite books, music, movies, and toys or games.

Have supplies on hand.

Keep extra supplies of food, water, medications, and your disaster supply kit on hand. These home care supplies include:

- thermometer
- soap
- box of disposable gloves
- medicine to reduce fever and pain (such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen)
- bleach
- alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- paper towels
- tissues
- surgical masks (one for each person)
- sugar, baking soda, salt

For more information on treating the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov and www.pandemicflu.gov.

What to Expect During a Flu Pandemic

At the start of a flu pandemic, health officials may call for certain actions to slow down the spread of flu. These actions limit meeting with other people and are called social distancing. Social distancing includes staying home when you are sick and away from others who are sick.

Social Distancing

Public health officials may ask for all people who are sick with the flu to stay home. This is called voluntary isolation. They may also ask that anyone who lives with someone who is sick with the flu to stay home, too. This is called voluntary quarantine.

Some social distancing measures are used to keep large groups of people from coming together. To slow the spread of flu, public health officials also might:

- Dismiss students from schools.
- Close home care, child care, and early care centers.
- Cancel all indoor and outdoor events that get large crowds (such as sports events, concerts, parades, and festivals).
- Close some businesses.
- Request that non-urgent meetings be postponed.
- Ask that people stay away from places with crowds (such as community centers, malls, and theaters).
- Request that services be postponed at all places of worship.

What Can You Do?

During a flu pandemic, it will be important to follow any instructions from health officials. Stay home and stay away from others who are sick as much as possible. If you are sick and you *must* go out (for example, to buy food), keep your distance from others and, if possible, wear a surgical mask to protect other people from getting the flu. Remember to:

- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Keep sick children home from school or childcare.
- Care for sick family members at home if possible.

Stay informed. It will be important to stay informed during a flu pandemic. Keep up-to-date on a possible flu pandemic from radio, television, and newspapers. For more information, go to:

- www.lapublichealth.org
- www.pandemicflu.gov
- www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/epo

or call 2-1-1 (800) 339-6993 (Los Angeles County Referrals)



Infection Control Checklist

Task	Received training (if applicable)	Sometimes	Always
For Staff			
Staff have received information about where to get their flu vaccines.			
Staff know and practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proper hand washing covering coughs and sneezes 			
Staff wash their hands when working with children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> before and after meals and feedings after washing a child's nose or mouth after touching objects with saliva or mucus after changing diapers after helping a child use the toilet 			
Staff know how and when to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers (for themselves and for children).			
Staff keep alcohol-based hand sanitizers out of the reach of children.			
Staff know and practice proper procedures for changing diapers to prevent the spread of germs.			
Staff know how to conduct a health check.			
Staff conduct a health check, using the Daily Health Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when children arrive before lunch before children leave for home 			
Staff know how to keep a daily sick log. This form is located: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 			
Staff know where a sick child may be kept from other children until a family member or guardian arrives. This "sick room" is located: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 			
Supplies to control the spread of germs are available. These supplies can easily be found: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 			

Infection Control Checklist, continued

Task	Received training (if applicable)	Sometimes	Always
Staff keep the environment clean by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disinfecting surfaces, toys, and commonly shared items at least once daily and when visibly soiled • using a household disinfectant that is registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use against bacteria and viruses, a hospital disinfectant registered by the EPA, or a chlorine bleach/hypochlorite solution registered by the EPA • making sanitizing solution (1/4 cup household bleach per gallon of clean water), if store-bought disinfectants are unavailable. Label container, "sanitizer." <i>Do not use this water for drinking.</i> 			
Staff are encouraged to stay home when sick.			
For Children			
Children know how to wash their hands properly.			
Children routinely wash their hands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • before and after meals • after going to the bathroom • after playtime • before going home • whenever their hands are dirty 			
Children know how to cover their coughs and sneezes properly.			
Children routinely cover their coughs and sneezes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with their elbow or sleeve • with tissue 			
For Families			
Families are encouraged to ensure their children (older than six months) receive a flu vaccine every year.			
Families are encouraged to keep sick children home.			
Families have received information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flu facts • flu vaccines • hand washing • how to cover coughs and sneezes • keeping children home when sick • how to treat the flu • when to seek medical care 			

Materials for Families

- Is it a Cold or the Flu? (Handout)
 - When to Keep Your Child Home (Handout)
 - Home Care for the Flu (Handout)
 - What to Expect During a Flu Pandemic (Handout)
 - Center is Open During Pandemic (Letter)
 - Center Will Close (Letter)
-

Is it a Cold or the Flu?

The symptoms of colds and the flu are very similar. Usually, symptoms of the flu are more severe and come on suddenly. This chart will help you tell the difference.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
High Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, 100°F–102°F (may be higher in young children) Starts suddenly
Headache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, often severe Starts suddenly
Body Aches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rare or mild 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, often severe Starts suddenly
Tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, can be extreme
Sore Throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, common
Cough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, mild to moderate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, can be severe
Stuffy Nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes

How Can I Protect Myself from Getting Sick with a Cold or the Flu?

The best way to protect yourself, your family, and the people you work with from getting the flu is to make sure you get a flu vaccine every year. Make sure everyone in your family (except infants younger than six months old) gets a flu vaccine, too.

Here are some simple ways to keep from getting sick with a cold or the flu or giving the flu to other people.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water (sing the Happy Birthday song twice as you wash or wash for 20 seconds).
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve if you don't have a tissue. Do not cough or sneeze into your hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Wash your hands afterward.
- Keep your hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth.
- Teach your children or the children you care for to wash their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes, too!
- Keep sick children at home. Children who go to the child care center or school when they are sick can make other children sick too.
- If you are sick, stay home from work, school, or other public places.

For more information on the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

When to Keep Your Child Home

During flu season, it is especially important to keep your child home if he or she is sick. Flu spreads easily from person to person. Keep your child home if he or she:

Seems sick.

- Signs your child may be ill include:
 - unusually pale skin
 - changes in behavior (lacks energy, does not take part in regular activities, bad mood, eats less)
 - sweating (when the weather is not hot outside and he or she has not been really active)

Has a fever.

- Ask your doctor about the best way to take your child's temperature (mouth, bottom, armpit, and/or ear):

Has a cough or sneeze that is:

- severe
- unusual for my child

Complains of pain.

- ears, throat, head, or chest
- muscle aches

Is sick to the stomach.

- thrown up in the past 12 hours

Has diarrhea.

- two or more episodes in the past 24 hours



Keep your child at home and away from the child care center until your child has been without symptoms, such as fever, for at least 24 hours.

For more information on the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

Home Care for the Flu

During a regular flu season and even during a pandemic, most people may not need to see a doctor and may be able to get better care at home. This is called *home care*.

People who live alone may need to take care of themselves. If you live alone and become sick during a flu pandemic, stay in touch with others by phone or e-mail and ask for help if needed.

Treating the Flu at Home

Many people may get better on their own when they stay home, rest, and take over-the-counter medicine (medicine you can buy without a doctor's prescription). Some people may have antiviral medication prescribed by a doctor. Antibiotics do not help treat the flu. The three most important things to do when treating the flu at home are:

1. Check for the signs of illness.
2. Give medicine to reduce the symptoms of flu.
3. Give lots of liquids.

1. Keep a log of the signs of illness.

Write down the date, the time, how high the fever is, and any other signs of illness (such as headache).

Keep track of any medicines taken (date and time and how much medicine).

If possible, make a new entry when signs of illness change.

2. Reduce the symptoms of flu.

Use over-the-counter medicine (medicine that does not need a doctor's prescription) to reduce fever and pain from headache, body aches, and sore throat.

Use ibuprofen (such as Advil™ or Motrin™) or acetaminophen (such as Tylenol™). Be sure to read the directions on the package.

- **Do not give aspirin to infants, children, or teenagers.** Aspirin can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.

Antibiotics will not help treat flu or cold viruses.

3. Give lots of liquids.

Begin offering lots of liquids at the first signs someone is sick with the flu. It is very important to give lots of liquids to help prevent dehydration. Dehydration can happen when the body loses too much water from high fever, vomiting (throwing up), or diarrhea (loose, watery stools). Dehydration can be serious, especially in children.

Offer clear liquids such as water, juice, and clear soups (for example, chicken broth). Popsicles, iced drinks, and ice cubes can also help.

When someone has high fever, give liquids that contain electrolytes to prevent dehydration (for example, Pedialyte™ and Infalyte™). Electrolytes

Home Care for the Flu, continued

are salts and minerals that control the amount of water in your body. You can find electrolyte drinks at the drug store or grocery store. You can also make your own electrolyte drink for someone who is older than twelve years.

How to Make an Electrolyte Drink

Combine:

- 1 quart of drinking water
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 2 tablespoons of sugar

Mix well until the salt and sugar dissolve. Add lemon juice for flavor, if desired.

(Note: If you don't have baking soda, add another 1/4 teaspoon of salt.)

When to Call or Seek Medical Help

Call your health care provider if these signs of illness appear:

- high fever
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- shaking chills
- coughing that produces thick mucus
- difficulty breathing

- long-term illness (such as heart or lung disease, diabetes, HIV, cancer) gets worse

If you have a long-term illness or are pregnant, you have a higher risk for getting very sick from the flu. Contact your medical provider during a flu pandemic.

When should I call 9-1-1?

Call 9-1-1 if you cannot reach your health care provider and you or a member of your household has any of the following signs of illness:

- difficulty breathing or chest pain with each breath
- bluish skin
- stiff neck
- inability to move an arm or leg
- seizure
- crankiness and/or confusion



Home Care for the Flu, continued

Limit the Spread of Flu Virus

It is important to take extra steps to prevent the spread of flu virus as you care for someone who has the flu. To limit the spread of illness:

- Select one person in the household to take care of someone who is home with the flu. (The caretaker should be the only person to go in and out of the room with meals, drinks, medicines, etc.)
- Keep the sick person in a separate room, if you can. If that's not possible, try to keep the sick person away from others in the house. (Someone who is sick should not have any visitors until he or she recovers.)
- Keep your distance as much as possible and avoid direct and close contact.
- Open windows occasionally, if possible, to let air flow through the room.
- Clean common surfaces and objects every day. (For example, clean doorknobs and handles, light switches, microwaves, phones, remote controls, toilet seats and handles, faucets, and non-fabric toys.) Use a labeled household disinfectant or a chlorine bleach mixture. Use gloves to protect hands from chemicals.

How to Make Your Own Sanitizing Solution

If you do not have store-bought disinfectants, you can make your own sanitizing solution by mixing 1/4 cup of bleach with one gallon of clean water. Label container, "sanitizer." *Do not use this water for drinking.*



- Always wash your hands *before* and *after* taking care of someone who is sick. (Make sure everyone in your household washes their hands often, too.)
- Use disposable gloves, if you have them, whenever you come in contact with the sick person's body fluids or mucus. (For example, when doing laundry or throwing away their tissues.) Throw away gloves after each use. Don't forget to wash hands.
- If possible, ask the sick person to wear a surgical mask when others are close by or if they are coughing and sneezing. (Surgical masks should

Home Care for the Flu, continued

be changed and thrown away when they become moist.)

- Have the sick person use hand-gel to wash his or her hands, if possible, after coughing or sneezing, touching dirty tissues, or removing a surgical mask.
- Do not share items such as eating utensils, cups, computers, phones, pens, clothes, and towels.

Other Things to Do

Help the sick person feel better.

To help the sick person feel better:

- Make him or her as comfortable as possible.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach.
- Offer favorite books, music, movies, and toys or games.

Have supplies on hand.

Keep extra supplies of food, water, medications, and your disaster supply kit on hand. These home care supplies include:

- thermometer
- soap
- box of disposable gloves
- medicine to reduce fever and pain (such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen)
- bleach
- alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- paper towels
- tissues
- surgical masks (one for each person)
- sugar, baking soda, salt

For more information on treating the flu, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov and www.pandemicflu.gov.

What to Expect During a Flu Pandemic

At the start of a flu pandemic, health officials may call for certain actions to slow down the spread of flu. These actions limit meeting with other people and are called social distancing. Social distancing includes staying home when you are sick and away from others who are sick.

Social Distancing

Public health officials may ask for all people who are sick with the flu to stay home. This is called voluntary isolation. They may also ask that anyone who lives with someone who is sick with the flu to stay home, too. This is called voluntary quarantine.

Some social distancing measures are used to keep large groups of people from coming together. To slow the spread of flu, public health officials also might:

- Dismiss students from schools.
- Close home care, child care, and early care centers.
- Cancel all indoor and outdoor events that get large crowds (such as sports events, concerts, parades, and festivals).
- Close some businesses.
- Request that non-urgent meetings be postponed.
- Ask that people stay away from places with crowds (such as community centers, malls, and theaters).
- Request that services be postponed at all places of worship.

What Can You Do?

During a flu pandemic, it will be important to follow any instructions from health officials. Stay home and stay away from others who are sick as much as possible. If you are sick and you *must* go out (for example, to buy food), keep your distance from others and, if possible, wear a surgical mask to protect other people from getting the flu. Remember to:

- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Keep sick children home from school or childcare.
- Care for sick family members at home if possible.

Stay informed. It will be important to stay informed during a flu pandemic. Keep up-to-date on a possible flu pandemic from radio, television, and newspapers. For more information, go to:

- www.lapublichealth.org
- www.pandemicflu.gov
- www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/epo

or call 2-1-1 (800) 339-6993 (Los Angeles County Referrals)





Center Is Open During Pandemic

Dear Family,

Many people throughout the United States and in other countries are becoming sick with the flu. Health officials are calling this worldwide outbreak a “flu pandemic.”

In our local community, home care, child care and early care centers, as well as public and private schools, remain open. Children may go to child care and school as usual. We will keep you updated with any important information.

We are also taking several steps to help keep the flu from spreading among our children. For example, we:

- Check children and staff often for signs of illness.
- Use disinfectant to clean all surfaces, such as desks and doorknobs.
- Make sure children and staff wash their hands often.
- Space cribs and cots farther apart (more than three feet).
- Provide tissue for coughs and sneezes.

Please keep your sick children at home to help us limit the spread of flu. If *anyone* in your household is sick with the flu, please keep your children at home, even when they seem well. If your child becomes sick during the day, we will contact you at once and ask you to take your child home.

We also ask that all members of your household take these simple steps to help prevent the spread of flu.

- **Wash your hands often.**
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or sleeve or tissue—not your hands.**
- **Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.**
- **Stay home if you are sick.**

Public health officials are also asking that everyone:

- **Avoid large crowds.**
- **Keep errands to a minimum.**
- **Stay away from others if you must go out.**



If the flu keeps spreading and many more people become sick, public health officials may request that home care, child care, and early care centers close. Schools may even be closed for weeks or months. These steps will help limit the spread of flu.

Please think about a plan to care for your child at home or someplace else if your regular care becomes unavailable.

Please be sure the contact information we have for you is up to date. We will use this information to contact you if your child becomes sick, or to let you know if the center must close. If you have any questions about whether we are open or closed, here are two ways you can reach us:

Sincerely,

Center Will Close

Dear Family,

Many children and their families are very sick with the flu. Public health officials have ordered all home care, child care, and early care centers in Los Angeles County to close. They may be closed for days or even weeks to help stop the spread of flu. All children should stay home.

We know this is a hard time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill.

The flu spreads easily from person-to-person. Everyone should stay home and away from other people as much as it is possible. Children and teens should not meet with their friends in person. Encourage children and teens to “meet” by phone or over the Internet.

We know that it may be hard to get medical care or even be seen in a hospital emergency room. Please read the information we are sending home with your child about how to take care of someone who is sick with the flu.

For more information, call your health care provider or visit the Los Angeles County Public Health Department’s Website: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov, or you may call 2-1-1 (800) 339-6993 (Los Angeles County Referrals).

Please be sure the contact information we have for you is up-to-date. We will use this information to let you know when children will be allowed to return to the center. If you need to reach us, here are two ways you can contact the center:

Sincerely,

Chapter 5

Getting Back to Normal

Getting back to normal after a flu pandemic will be different than recovering from other emergencies, such as an earthquake or wildfire. These emergencies usually happen over one day to several days. And they usually happen in just one city or region. Outside recovery assistance and support, including workers and supplies, are shared and brought in. But a flu pandemic will happen in every city and every state at almost the same time. And the spread of illness may start, stop, and start again. These outbreaks of the flu may last for six to twelve weeks, and the pandemic may go on for up to two years.

The length of a flu pandemic and the fact it will happen everywhere at the same time will make it very difficult to get supplies and support from outside of your own community. The stop-and-go nature of the pandemic will also make getting back to normal difficult to do. Communities, including child care providers, will need to use the resources that are on hand wisely as they try to get back to normal. At the same time, they will also need to prepare for a possible return, or “wave,” of the flu.

What is a pandemic wave?

During a pandemic, the spread of illness will have periods of starting, stopping, and starting again. These periods of flu outbreaks are called waves.

- A flu pandemic may not end with the first wave.
- Each community may experience two or three waves of the flu, with each wave lasting for six to twelve weeks.
- Not knowing when, or if, another wave of illness will happen may be very stressful.

How can I help staff and families prepare for the next wave?

After the first wave, when the spread of illness has stopped, it will be very important for staff and families to prepare, as best as they can, for the possibility of another wave of illness.

- Encourage staff and families to:
 - restock emergency and medical supplies
 - update contact emergency information
 - identify resources for backup child care, financial aid, mental health support, or food, if there are shortages
- Emphasize the importance of simple, everyday steps (such as washing hands often; covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning surfaces, toys, and children's hands; staying home when sick, etc.) to help prevent getting or spreading the flu.

What can I do to help the mental health of staff and families?

Your staff and the children and families your center serves may face many challenges during a flu pandemic. These challenges may be very stressful. Reactions to stress will vary.

Some of the events and experiences that may cause stress during a pandemic include:

- illness and death of children from the center, coworkers, friends, and family members
- ongoing fear of getting sick or giving the flu to others
- ongoing fear of family and friends becoming sick, especially children
- fatigue and worry from having to take care of others who are sick
- isolation and loneliness (from having to stay home alone or practicing self-care while sick)
- losing a job or not being allowed to go to work because of illness or the business is closed
- financial problems or worries about money
- difficulties getting medical care and attention
- shortages of food and other important supplies
- limited ability to socialize, visit family and friends, and go to public places

Providing information and support to your staff and the children and families your center serves will be important in helping them to recover. Some of the things you can do to help are

- Educate your staff and families about recognizing the signs of and managing stress.
- Be familiar with the ethnic and cultural makeup of your staff and the families the center serves. Different communities respond to and show reactions to trauma (such as stress, grief, and fear) differently.
- Prepare contact information on local mental health and faith-based support.
- Have information on city, county, and other toll-free and “hot line” telephone numbers that provide crisis counseling and/or referrals to mental health resources. (Call 2-1-1 (800) 339-6993 on your telephone to connect with Los Angeles County Referrals system.)

- Prepare and update contact information on local resources for critical services and supplies (such as financial aid, emergency food sources, medical care and supplies, backup child care, etc.).
- Prepare learning activities that parents can do with their children at home if the center closes. Distribute these materials to families.
- Be prepared to listen. Offer empathy, compassion, encouragement, and support.

What can my staff do to help the children’s mental health?

Providing a safe, predictable environment that offers comfort will be one of the most important things you can do for children during a flu epidemic.

Listening and talking to children about their concerns can help to reassure them that they will be safe. Allow them to talk about how they have been affected by what is happening around them and how they are feeling. Children react to stress at their own developmental level and stage.

Here are some general things you and your staff can do to help the children at your center.

- Create and stick to regular routines.
- If your center has reopened, try to do things as they were done before the center closed.
- Provide extra comfort and reassurance, as needed.
 - You may want to use the morning check-in time as an opportunity for children to bring up and discuss their feelings and experiences related to the flu pandemic.
 - You may want to choose an area in the room that offers some privacy for these discussions.
- Set gentle but firm limits for “acting out” behavior.
- Listen to what children have to say.
- Answer questions honestly. (It’s important to admit you don’t have an answer to a question.)

- Don't dwell on frightening details.
- Discuss positive things, such as being able to come to the center and how people have been sharing and helping one another.
- Let children know that one way they can help is to wash their hands often and well and to cover their coughs and sneezes.

How to Talk with Young Children about Feelings

Allow young children to bring up their feelings and experiences in their own time, and when they feel safe and ready. Don't ask them directly to describe their emotions. (For example, don't ask them if they feel sad, scared, confused, or angry.)

Young children often have a hard time finding the words to express their emotions. Instead, ask them to tell you about physical sensations. (You may want to use an outline of a person to help children talk about their physical sensations.) If children are able to talk about their emotions, you may want to discuss a range of positive and negative emotions and let them pick which one they feel.

Do not speak words or emotions on their behalf. It is not helpful and keeps them from sharing their experience. (You may want to ask them to draw, or show you, pictures that represent how they feel.)

During the flu pandemic, encourage children to express their feeling and emotions through activities such as supervised play, drawings, puppet shows, and story telling.

What are some actions I can take to help the center recover during and after the pandemic?

Unlike most other natural and manmade disasters, a flu pandemic could last for more than a year with several waves, or outbreaks, of the flu. Preparing for the next wave—while balancing steps for recovery—is an important strategy for your center to stay open.

- Check local, state, and national health information sources for any updates on next pandemic waves. For example:
 - www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
 - www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/epo/
 - www.pandemicflu.gov
- Assess costs and resources, including staff, to keep your center open.
- Recover from problems caused by shortage of other services, including trash pickup or mail delivery.
- If possible, restock supplies, especially those that help prevent the spread of germs (infection control).
- Maintain daily health checks for both children and staff.
- Continue routine hand washings and other important infection control measures, such as frequent cleaning of surfaces and toys.
- Maintain a list of staff availability and updated contact information.
- Stay in touch with local partner organizations for opportunities to receive and share support and resources.
- Keep in contact with local community agencies and organizations that may be able to provide support and resources to your staff and the children and families you serve.

Definition

Wave: An outbreak of flu that may last five to ten weeks. During a flu pandemic, communities may experience two or three waves, or outbreaks, of the flu.



Action Steps for Staff *(see Materials for Staff)*

1. Distribute and discuss **Signs of Stress, Ways to Manage Stress, and Providing Emotional Comfort, Care, and Support to Staff, Children, and their Families.**
2. Review mental health and faith-based support listed in the pandemic preparedness plan. Provide contact information on these resources.
3. Review contact information for financial aid, emergency food sources, medical care and supplies, backup child care, and other resources.
4. Provide tips to families on preparing for another possible pandemic flu wave.
5. Maintain all daily health checks for children and staff.
6. Ensure staff wash hands properly and often.
7. Maintain other important infection control measures, such as frequent cleaning of surfaces and toys.
8. Report any suspected outbreak of flu or illness to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (888) 397-3993. For a complete list of reportable illnesses, go to the following Website:
www.lapublichealth.org
9. Review online resources, such as:
 - www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
 - www.cdc.gov
10. Restock supplies, as available.
11. Talk with children about their feelings and experiences.



Action Steps for Children

1. Ensure children wash hands properly and often.
2. Have children discuss their feelings and experiences.



Action Steps for Families *(see Materials for Families)*

1. Distribute **Signs of Stress**, and **Ways to Manage Stress** handouts.
2. Distribute **Center is Open** and **Staying Prepared** family letters.

Materials for Staff

- Signs of Stress (Handout)
 - Ways to Manage Stress (Handout)
 - Providing Emotional Comfort,
Care, and Support to Staff,
Children, and their Families
(Handout)
-

Signs of Stress

Stress is a normal response to a difficult situation, such as a flu pandemic. All children and adults experience and show stress differently. During the breaks between waves of illness and after the pandemic is over, many people will begin to recover. Their signs of stress will go away. But for some people, the signs of stress continue or get worse, and life doesn't return to normal.

This chart shows some of the signs of stress for children. Seek help for yourself or children if any of these signs are severe and don't go away.

Behavior	Emotions	Physical	Mental
eating or sleeping much more or less	anxiety	headaches	inability to accept or cope with the death of loved one(s)
withdrawing from others	moodiness	stomachaches	distressing dreams, nightmares
neglecting responsibilities	sadness, tearfulness	difficulty sleeping	thoughts or images that won't go away
return to younger behaviors (for example, going back to diapers, fear of strangers)	short temper, anger	difficulty eating	difficulty concentrating
picking fights with others, or acting out	fear	worsening of health conditions	difficulty remembering
nervous habits (such as teeth grinding, nail biting, jaw clenching)	despair, hopelessness	fatigue/exhaustion	difficulty making decisions
	feeling "nothing," emotionally disconnected	skin breakouts (such as hives, eczema)	preoccupation with death/destruction
	feeling tense and "on edge"	rapid heartbeat	trouble thinking clearly
			poor judgment

Additionally, adults may experience guilt, shame, loss of sex drive, and/or chest pain.

Local resources for mental health support can be found at: _____

Local resources for faith-based support can be found at: _____

Local resources for medical care or supplies, financial aid, food, backup child care, and other supplies can be found at: _____

Ways to Manage Stress

Feeling stress is a common reaction after disasters. But stress can make it more difficult to recover. Too much stress can even harm a person's health.

Learning how to manage stress in healthy ways is important for moving on with life. Each person responds differently to stress. No single method for managing stress works for everyone or every situation. But there are many different ways for managing stress. Here are some approaches that might work for you.

Connect with others.

Seek out family and friends. A strong support system will help protect you from the effects of stress.

If you or others are sick, use the phone or e-mail to limit person-to-person contact.

Talk to someone you trust.

Find a mental health provider or faith-based support.

Focus on the positive.

Take a moment to think about the good things in your life.

Get enough rest.

Try to get eight hours of sleep each night. Sleep recharges your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired can make it hard to think clearly. It can also increase the chances of an accident.

Do something enjoyable every day.

Make time for activities that bring joy. (For example, go for a walk, work in the garden, play with a pet, play a musical instrument, read a good book, etc.)

Use relaxation methods.

Practice methods for relaxing. Slow, deep breathing; muscle relaxation; meditation; yoga; stretching; and listening to quiet music are examples of ways to help lower stress.

Faith-based methods may be a powerful source of calmness for some people.

Exercise regularly.

Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the



effects of stress. Avoid using the gym if you or other people are sick.

Eat a healthy diet.

Eat a balanced diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and foods with whole grain and low in fat, salt, and sugar.

Use caffeine and sugar in moderation.

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.

Providing Emotional Comfort, Care, and Support to Staff, Children, and their Families

Providing emotional support during a flu pandemic is an important way to help people and to show them you care. Formal training is not needed. It is important to provide comfort, address basic needs, encourage self-efficacy (empowerment), and respect an individual's own coping style.

Almost all people need some level of care and support after a disaster. Providing support to staff, children, and their families helps the environment at the center feel safe and calm. And it promotes connectedness to others, self efficacy, and hopefulness.

Staff and Families

Do

- Help people meet their basic needs for food and shelter, and obtain emergency medical attention. Provide repeated, simple, and accurate information on how to get these.
- Listen. Validate feelings and thoughts. Keep in mind there is no wrong or right way to feel, and people from different communities react differently to stress.
- Be friendly, compassionate, and acknowledge how stressful and

difficult things may be during a pandemic.

- Provide accurate information about the flu pandemic or disaster and the response efforts. This will help people to understand the situation.
- If possible, help people connect with others for support (such as backup child care or ideas on learning activities to do at home).
- If you or others are sick, use the phone or e-mail to stay in contact and ask for help if needed.
- Connect people to other support systems, such mental health providers or faith-based support.
- Keep families together. Keep children with parents/guardians or other close relatives whenever possible. (connectedness)
- Suggest practical and realistic strategies that steer people toward helping themselves. (self-efficacy)
 - Instill confidence and ability to cope.
 - Explore past coping strategies. Reinforce strengths and positive coping strategies.
 - Encourage a “one thing at a time” approach.

Providing Comfort, continued

- Engage people in meeting their own needs. (self-efficacy)
- Find out what government and non-government services are available, where they are located, and direct people to those services. (hopefulness)
- If you know that more help and services are on the way, remind people of this when they express fear or worry. (hopefulness)

Don't

- Don't force people to share their stories with you, especially very personal details. (This may decrease calmness in people who are not ready to share their experiences.)
- Don't give simple reassurances like "everything will be okay" or "at least you survived." (Statements like these tend to diminish calmness.)
- Don't tell people what you think they should be feeling, thinking, or doing now. Don't tell them how they should have acted earlier. (This decreases self-efficacy.)
- Don't tell people why you think they have suffered by giving reasons about their personal behaviors or beliefs. (This also decreases self-efficacy.)
- Don't make promises that you or others may not be able to keep. (Broken promises decrease hope.)

- Don't criticize existing services or relief activities in front of people in need of these services. (This may decrease hopefulness or decrease calming.)

Children

During a flu pandemic, one of the most important things you can do for the children at your center is to provide a safe, predictable environment that offers comfort.

Do

- Listen and talk to children about their concerns to help reassure them.
- Allow them to talk about how they have been affected by what is happening around them and how they are feeling. Children react to stress at their own developmental level and stage.
- Create and stick to regular routines.
- If your center has reopened, try to do things as they were done before the center closed.
- Provide extra comfort and reassurance, as needed.
- Set gentle but firm limits for "acting out" behavior.
- Listen to what children have to say.
- Answer questions honestly. (It's important to admit you don't have an answer to a question.)

Providing Comfort, continued

- Discuss positive things, such as being able to come to the center and how people have been sharing and helping one another.
- Let children know that one way they can help is to wash their hands often and well and to cover their coughs and sneezes.
- Allow young children to bring up their feelings and experiences in their own time, and when they feel safe and ready.
 - You may want to use the morning check-in time as an opportunity for children to bring up and discuss their feelings and experiences related to the flu pandemic.
 - You may want to choose an area in the room that offers some privacy for these discussions.
 - Young children often have a hard time finding the words to express their emotions. Instead, ask them to tell you about physical sensations. (You may want to use an outline of a person to help children talk about their physical sensations.)
 - You may want to ask them to draw (or show you) pictures that represent how they feel.
 - If children are able to talk about their emotions, you may want to discuss a range of positive and

negative emotions and let them pick which one they feel.

- Encourage children to express their feeling and emotions during the flu pandemic through activities such as supervised play, drawings, puppet shows, and story telling.

Don't

- Don't dwell on frightening details.
- Don't ask them directly to describe their emotions. (For example, don't ask them if they feel sad, scared, confused, or angry.)
- Do not speak words or emotions on their behalf. (It is not helpful and keeps them from sharing their experience. You may want to ask them to draw, or show you, pictures that represent how they feel.)

Sources:

Psychological First Aid, Field Operations Guide, Second Edition, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, National Center for PTSD

Understanding the Effects of Trauma and Traumatic Events to Help Prevent, Mitigate and Foster Recovery for Individuals, Organizations and Communities, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

Materials for Families

- Signs of Stress (Handout)
 - Ways to Manage Stress (Handout)
 - Center Is Open (Letter)
 - Staying Prepared (Letter)
-

Signs of Stress

Stress is a normal response to a difficult situation, such as a flu pandemic. All children and adults experience and show stress differently. During the breaks between waves of illness and after the pandemic is over, many people will begin to recover. Their signs of stress will go away. But for some people, the signs of stress continue or get worse, and life doesn't return to normal.

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picking fights with others, or acting out	fear	worsening of health conditions	difficulty remembering
nervous habits (such as teeth grinding, nail biting, jaw clenching)	despair, hopelessness	fatigue/exhaustion	difficulty making decisions
	feeling "nothing," emotionally disconnected	skin breakouts (such as hives, eczema)	preoccupation with death/destruction
	feeling tense and "on edge"	rapid heartbeat	trouble thinking clearly
			poor judgment

Additionally, adults may experience guilt, shame, loss of sex drive, and/or chest pain.

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Seek out family and friends. A strong support system will help protect you from the effects of stress.

If you or others are sick, use the phone or e-mail to limit person-to-person contact.

Talk to someone you trust.

Find a mental health provider or faith-based support.

Focus on the positive.

Take a moment to think about the good things in your life.

Get enough rest.

Try to get eight hours of sleep each night. Sleep recharges your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired can make it hard to think clearly. It can also increase the chances of an accident.

Do something enjoyable every day.

Make time for activities that bring joy. (For example, go for a walk, work in the garden, play with a pet, play a musical instrument, read a good book, etc.)

Use relaxation methods.

Practice methods for relaxing. Slow, deep breathing; muscle relaxation; meditation; yoga; stretching; and listening to quiet music are examples of ways to help lower stress.

Faith-based methods may be a powerful source of calmness for some people.

Exercise regularly.

Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the



effects of stress. Avoid using the gym if you or other people are sick.

Eat a healthy diet.

Eat a balanced diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and foods with whole grain and low in fat, salt, and sugar.

Use caffeine and sugar in moderation.

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.

Center Is Open

Dear Family,

Our local health officials have declared that it is safe for our center to reopen. We will begin providing child care on _____.

As children return to the center, it is very important that everyone keeps on doing the things that help stop the spread of flu. Please make sure everyone in your household, including your children, continue to:

- Wash hands well and often.
- Keep hands away from the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid going out, unless necessary.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with the elbow or sleeve—*not* the hands.
- Stay home if sick.

We ask that you keep all sick children at home so that they do not spread the flu to other children and their families.

Keep your child home if he or she:

- appears sick
- has a cough or sneeze that is severe or unusual
- is sick to the stomach
- has a temperature
- complains of pain
- has diarrhea
- **Keep children home if they are sick or if *anyone* in your household becomes sick with the flu.**

If another outbreak of flu happens, home care, child care, and early care centers may have to close.

Please be sure the contact information we have for you is up-to-date. We will use it to continue to give you important information, to contact you if your child gets sick, and to let you know if the center must close. If you need to reach us, here are two ways you can contact the center: _____

For more information about the flu outbreak in our community or how to treat the flu, call your health care provider or visit the Los Angeles Public Health Department's Website: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

We are looking forward to seeing you and your children again soon.

Sincerely,



Staying Prepared

Dear Family,

Health officials have said that another “wave,” or outbreak, of flu could happen. This letter is to remind you of the importance of staying prepared. During the next outbreak of the flu, it is always possible that child care and early care centers, as well as school and some businesses, may have to close.

We encourage you to take this time, if possible, to restock your emergency and food supplies. This will help prepare your family for the possibility of another wave of pandemic flu.

If you or a family member gets sick, it may be difficult to be seen by a health care provider at any medical facility. Please let us know if you need additional copies of the **Preparing to Stay Home** checklist and/or **Home Care for the Flu** fact sheet.

Please remember to keep your **Family Emergency Contacts** list up-to-date and in an easy-to-find place. Also, please be sure the contact information we have for you is up-to-date. We will use it to list important information, to contact you if your child gets sick, and to let you know if the center must close. If you need to reach us, here are two ways you can contact the center:

For more information about the flu outbreak in our community or how to treat the flu, call your health care provider or visit the Los Angeles Public Health Department’s Website: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov, or call 2-1-1 (800) 339-6993 (Los Angeles County Referrals).

Sincerely,