

20 Steps Child Care Providers Can Take Now to Reduce the Spread of H1N1 Flu (formerly known as Swine Flu) and Other Flu-like Illnesses

Health officials continue to monitor the spread of the H1N1 influenza virus. Although no one knows for sure, public health experts are concerned that the H1N1 virus may change and become more severe over time, contributing to a more severe flu season this fall and winter.

Child Care Providers can help protect the health of the children and families they serve. Here are 20 steps that you can take now to reduce the spread of H1N1 Flu and other flu-like illnesses.

1. Learn as much as you can about H1N1 flu and know where to go for the most current information. Sources of accurate information include:
 - Your local county health department
 - The Kansas Department of Health and Environment at <http://www.kdheks.gov>
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
2. Develop a plan to address possible disruptions in learning and program operations. How will you deal with high absentee rates among children and staff? If it became necessary to close, how would you communicate with staff and parents? A useful planning tool is available at http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/child_care.pdf
3. Review your policies for the exclusion of sick children and staff. Make sure that the parents of the children in care and staff are aware and follow your policies. Encourage parents to plan now in the event their child becomes sick. Sick children should not be taken to another child care program or other group setting, even temporarily.
4. Review children's files and update contact information.
5. Make plans for the isolation and supervision of sick children with influenza-like symptoms until their parents can pick them up.



6. Recognize symptoms of H1N1 flu:

- Fever greater than 100° F
- Cough, sore throat, runny nose
- Aches, chills, fatigue
- In some cases diarrhea and vomiting



7. Take care of yourself. Eat a healthy diet and drink lots of water, get plenty of rest and find healthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety.

8. Don't work when you are sick.

9. Clean toys, commonly shared items, and touched surfaces like handrails and doorknobs at least daily and when visibly soiled. Set aside toys children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated with bodily fluids, until you are able to clean and sanitize them.

10. Avoid over-crowded conditions. Encourage children to spread out during story and circle times.

11. Allow more than the two foot minimum required by child care regulations between cribs, cots and sleep mats. Place cribs, cots and sleep mats so that children rest "head to toe" rather than "face to face".

12. Get plenty of fresh air. Children should have an opportunity for daily outdoor play, weather permitting. Indoors, rooms should be well ventilated. To promote air circulation, open windows whenever weather permits or when children are out of the area.

13. Stock all sinks and restrooms with soap and paper towels.

14. Place boxes of facial tissues and waste containers for used tissues throughout the child care area and in places readily accessible to children and staff.

15. Wash your hands frequently with soap and running water. Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer when soap and running water are not available. It is especially important to wash your hands:

- Upon arrival for the day or when moving from a unit of children to another;
- Before and after eating, handling food or feeding a child;
- After diapering, using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet; and
- After handling bodily fluid (mucus, blood, vomit), from sneezing, wiping and blowing noses, from mouths, or from sores.





16. Give special attention to teaching children how to wash their hands and monitor their hand washing.

17. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve if a tissue isn't available. Be mindful not to cradle babies in your arms if you've used your sleeve to catch your sneeze!

18. Teach children to use a tissue to cover their coughs and catch their sneezes or to do the "Dracula catch" when tissues aren't handy.

19. Teach parents simple things they can do to keep their families healthy and to reduce the spread of H1N1.

20. Maintain regular communication with your local health department to obtain guidance about reporting flu-like illness in your program.

The KDHE website at: <http://www.kdheks.gov> contains additional materials and updated resources. Child care providers are encouraged to check the KDHE website regularly for the most current guidance concerning H1N1 Flu.



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Through education, direct services and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent illness, injuries and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.



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