

Kohl's Cares and Children's Flu Prevention Project



Influenza: The basics

What is influenza?

Influenza is a virus that infects the respiratory tract. Influenza is often called "the flu."

What are the symptoms of influenza?

Influenza symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, congestion, and a runny nose. Sometimes influenza can cause diarrhea and vomiting. This occurs more often in children.

How is influenza spread?

Influenza is most often spread from person to person when an ill person coughs and sneezes. Influenza virus can also be spread through hands contaminated with the virus when a healthy person touches their nose, mouth or eyes.

If you are exposed to someone with influenza, how long does it take for you to get symptoms?

The time from exposure to disease is called the incubation period. The incubation period for influenza is one to seven days.

How long can a person with influenza spread the virus?

People with influenza can spread the virus from one to two days before their symptoms begin to seven days after their symptoms start. Children, especially small children, and people with weakened immune systems can sometimes spread the virus 10 days after symptoms start. Even though people can spread influenza before and after developing symptoms, they spread the virus most often when they have a fever.

How can you prevent the spread of influenza?

There are four basic steps everyone can take to prevent the spread of influenza: wash your hands, cover your cough and sneeze, stay home when you are sick, and get vaccinated against influenza.

For more information about Kohl's Cares and Children's Flu Prevention Project go to: childrensMN.org/flu.



Kohl's Cares and Children's Flu Prevention Project



Influenza: Prevention

How do you prevent the spread of influenza?

There are four basic steps that everyone should take to prevent the spread of influenza: wash your hands, cover your cough and sneeze, stay home when you are sick, and get vaccinated against influenza. Following these steps also prevents the spread of all infections.

Clean your hands

Clean your hands with soap and water after coughing or sneezing, after going to the bathroom, and before preparing or eating food. Using warm water and soap, rub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is also effective for cleaning hands. However, if there is organic material on your hands such as mucus or dirt, hands must be washed with soap and water.

Cover your cough and sneeze

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue into the trash. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands.

Stay home when you are sick

Stay home from work, school or childcare when you are sick and limit your contact with others. Follow exclusion policies for your school or childcare before sending your child back to school.

Get vaccinated against influenza

The best way to prevent influenza is to get vaccinated. Vaccine is highly effective in preventing influenza. Everyone age six months or older should get vaccinated against influenza every year.

For more information about Kohl's Cares and Children's Flu Prevention Project go to: childrensMN.org/flu.

