

## Flu Information

Flu season is upon us and expected to spread in Massachusetts this fall and winter. Flu can be very serious, especially for children 5 years old and younger, and for children and adults with chronic health conditions that make them more likely to get sick with the flu. Children with the flu miss days of school, can cause parents to miss work, and can spread the flu to others. Vaccination for the H1N1 pandemic strain and two other strains of influenza are now recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older.

Here are some ways to protect your child from the flu:

- Get your child vaccinated today. Vaccination is the best way to keep your child from getting the flu. Call your pediatrician or visit a local flu clinic (CVS, Wal Mart, and Target are vaccinating now). Note: Your child needs to be vaccinated this year, even if he/she was vaccinated last year.
- Encourage your children to wash their hands often and use hand sanitizers.
- Teach your children to cough or sneeze into the inside of their elbow or in tissues (not their hands) and to wash their hands after blowing their nose or coughing.

If your child is sick

- **Keep your child home.** It is very important that your child does not go to school where flu could spread to other people.
- **Please call the school** and let us know if your child has flu-like symptoms, such as fever, cough and/or sore throat.
- **All children with flu symptoms should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100.4 degrees or more), without the use of fever-reducing medicines.** For most children this will be about 4 days.
- If your child is ill with flu-like symptoms, he/she will be sent home. Please make sure emergency contact information is kept up to date and someone will be readily available to dismiss your child.

If you would like to find more information about influenza go to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website: [mass.gov/flu](http://mass.gov/flu)