

Information for Parents with Children at High Risk for Flu Complications

Children with chronic health problems such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, metabolic conditions, neurologic and neuromuscular disorders, or who are pregnant are at higher risk of having complications from flu. In addition, all children younger than 5 years old are at higher risk of flu complications compared to older children. **If you are not sure if any of your children are at higher risk for flu complications, please check with a doctor.**

Action steps for parents with children at high risk for flu complications:

- 1. Contact your doctor right away if your child develops influenza-like-illness (fever greater than 100 degrees and cough or sore throat).** This is important because the antiviral medicines used to treat flu work best when started within the first 2 days of getting sick. Your doctor will tell you what special care is needed for your child.
- 2. Talk to your doctor and child's school to develop a plan on how to handle your child's special needs.**
- 3. Get your child vaccinated for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.**
- 4. Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:**
 - Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed.
 - Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
 - Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.
 - Update emergency contact lists.
 - Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if schools are dismissed or your child is sick and must stay home.
- 5. Encourage your child to practice good hygiene, including: covering the nose and mouth with a tissue (or using the upper arm/sleeve) when coughing or sneezing and throwing the tissue in the trash after use, and washing hands often with soap and water – especially after coughing or sneezing.**
- 6. Keep up to date on national and state information and guidance, at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents/> and www.ready.illinois.gov**