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## Influenza Preparedness for Schools

### Action Steps for Parents of 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 your doctor.

#### Preventive Measures

Keep children at high risk for flu complications from getting sick with the flu.

- **Practice good hand hygiene:** Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. For more resources on hand hygiene, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/>.
- **Practice good respiratory etiquette:** Remind your child to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing, and to throw the tissue in the trash after use. Please visit [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm) for more information.
- **Keep your child away from people who are sick.**
- **Clean surfaces and objects that your child frequently touches:** Use routine cleaning products.
- **Consider your child's risk of exposure if they attend public gatherings:** People who are at risk of complications from flu should consider staying away from public gatherings when there is a lot of flu in the community.
- **Develop a plan on how to handle your child's special needs:** Talk with your doctor and your child's school.
- **Ask about getting a flu shot:** Call your health care provider or the Orange County Health Referral line at (800) 564-8448. For more information please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm>.

#### When Flu Occurs

- **Contact your doctor immediately if your child is sick:** Antiviral medications work best when given within 24 hours of getting sick. Your doctor will advise you what, if any, medication is recommended.
- **Don't send children to school if they are sick:** Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines (such as ibuprofen or Tylenol).
- **Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks clear fluids.**
- **Keep your sick child in a separate room:** Try as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are not sick.

#### Emergency Warning Signs That Need Urgent Medical Attention

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not urinating or no tears when crying
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

For more information, please visit the Orange County Department of Education's H1N1/Flu website at [http://www.ocde.k12.ca.us/flu\\_update.asp](http://www.ocde.k12.ca.us/flu_update.asp).