

# Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family from the Flu this School Year

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 ways that may prevent you and your family from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective and should be used when soap and water are not available.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
3. **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. **Get your family vaccinated** for both seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu. Seasonal flu vaccines may be available beginning as early as September, and 2009 H1N1 flu vaccines are expected to be available beginning in late October. Watch for flu clinics at your doctor's office, clinic, pharmacy or school and take advantage of them as soon as available. Call your doctor for advice if you are not sure about whether or not you should have the vaccine.

**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 children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.
- Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age and those children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.