

Unlike the common cold, the flu causes severe illness and can be life threatening.

Each year about 1 in every 1,000 children younger than 5 years old will be hospitalized because of the flu.

Last year over 150 children in the U.S. died from complications of the flu.



Children under 6 months old can also get very sick from the flu. But they are too young to get a flu vaccine. The best way to protect them is to make sure their household members and their caregivers are vaccinated.



Iowa Department of Public Health
Promoting & protecting the health of Iowans.

Influenza and your CHILD

How can you help stop the spread of germs



Flu is a severe illness

Flu (or influenza) means many things to many people. To doctors, flu means influenza. It is caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu usually spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Some children are at high risk of having complications from the flu.

Flu could make them very sick or even kill them. Flu mostly affects the breathing system. The flu can be dangerous for people with asthma. People in close contact with asthmatics should also get a flu shot.

- ▶ Children are more likely to get the flu than anyone else
- ▶ Children with flu are more contagious than adults
- ▶ Flu is very common in child care centers and schools in the winter and spring
- ▶ Children with the flu get more ear infections, have more doctor visits, and have to take more medicine
- ▶ Children who get the flu in school or child care bring it home. That is the most common way for flu to enter the home every winter.
- ▶ Flu puts thousands of children under 2 years of age in the hospital every year. Flu will kill some of these children.

▶ How can I help stop the spread of germs?

- Wash your hands with soap and running water often.
- Stay home from work or school when you are sick to prevent the spread of germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose. Germs spread when you touch a contaminated object then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.

For more information, or to find out where you can get vaccinated, contact your doctor, local health department, or call the Healthy Child Care Iowa Talkline: **1-800-369-2229**

