

Seasonal Influenza: Guide for parents

Dear Parents,

As influenza seasons take place each year in fall and winter, this guide is prepared to help you be more aware of how to protect yourself, your children and your whole family from influenza.

Seasonal influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses, which circulate in all parts of the world affecting all age groups. It is characterized by a sudden onset of fever, cough (usually dry), headache, muscle and joint pain, sore throat and a runny or blocked nose.

The following advice is important to avoid getting seasonal influenza:

1. Protect your children by getting the seasonal influenza vaccine every year

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent the disease

2. Personnel hygiene habits to keep your children healthy

- ✓ Washing the hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- ✓ Covering coughs and sneezes with tissue or by coughing into the inside of the elbow
- ✓ Avoiding touching the eyes, nose, or mouth immediately after touching contaminated surfaces
- ✓ Avoiding close contact with sick people
- ✓ **Be sure to set a good example by doing all the above by yourself**

3. Keep your sick child at home, if he/she develops these symptoms:

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea

- ✓ General malaise or feeling of fatigue, weakness or muscle ache
- ✓ Frequent dry or wet cough
- ✓ Runny or blocked nose

If your child is diagnosed with influenza, please make sure you provide the school doctor/nurse with the clinic/hospital case report and the laboratory results if available.

- 1. Don't send your child back to school, until he/she has fully recovered from the illness (24 hours after being fever free without using fever-reducing medications)**

Finally, we would like to reiterate the importance of informing the teacher or school doctor/nurse if your child got a serious illness, or has been admitted to the hospital.