



Department of Health
Public Health Division

September 2009

Dear Child Care Professional,

Many parents and child care providers are concerned about the new Pandemic 2009 H1N1 (Swine) flu and its impact on children, families and the child care program itself. As anyone who works with young children knows, childcare programs provide many opportunities for the spread of disease because groups of young children are in such close contact with one another. Because babies and children under 5 years of age are especially vulnerable to severe illness, complications and hospitalization from flu, it's important that we protect children in child care centers, family child care homes and schools. This "Flu Toolkit" provides you with some practical information to limit the spread of infections in child care settings and resources to use when confusion and concerns arise.

You can help by using the contents of this Toolkit to:

- Teach children and staff to reduce the spread of flu by practicing sneezing and coughing into elbows or sleeves, and proper hand washing.
- Exclude children and staff with flu-like symptoms (fever with cough or sore throat) until they have been free of fever (100°) for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications). They should stay home and not go into another group child care program.
- Conduct daily health checks to identify early illness in children and staff.
- Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces routinely.
- Encourage seasonal flu and pandemic flu vaccinations for children, staff, and families for whom it is recommended. Don't forget yourself!
- Stay current with information from the Health Department and the CDC. Information on the flu may change frequently as more is learned.

Protect children and staff in high risk groups from getting the flu. Groups at high risk for complications from the flu include: children between 6 months and 5 years of age; people of all ages with chronic medical conditions (such as lung disease including asthma, diabetes, nerve disorders or heart disease); women who are pregnant during the flu season; people with compromised immune systems; and people over 50 years of age.

This fall seasonal flu and Pandemic 2009 H1N1 (swine) flu will be circulating at the same time and we will all need to take extra precautions, including immunizations. Please help us educate parents (see *Letter to Parents*), staff and children about limiting the spread of disease and about the importance of preparation. And many thanks to BANANAS and their partner Bayer Corporation for producing and mailing your *Flu Toolkit for Child Care*.

Sincerely,

Janet Berreman, MD, MPH
Acting Health Officer