



**COLORADO**

Department of Public  
Health & Environment

Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

## Influenza Information and Guidelines for Schools and Child Care Facilities December 11, 2014

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) conducts statewide surveillance for influenza. Over the past few weeks, influenza activity has increased across Colorado. From the beginning of this influenza season (which started on September 28) through the week ending December 6, there have been 248 influenza-associated hospitalizations reported in 23 counties, and 24 outbreaks in long term care facilities. CDPHE does not conduct surveillance in schools and child care settings for influenza or respiratory illness, but has heard anecdotal reports of increased respiratory illness in these settings.

State laboratory virologic surveillance shows that virtually all influenza viruses currently circulating in Colorado are the influenza A (H3N2) virus. During past seasons when influenza A (H3N2) viruses have predominated, higher overall and age-specific hospitalization rates and more mortality have been observed, especially among older people, very young children, and persons with certain chronic medical conditions compared with seasons during which influenza A (H1N1) or influenza B viruses have predominated.

Each day, about 55 million students and 7 million staff attend the more than 130,000 public and private schools in the US. Schools can help protect one-fifth of the country's population by implementing the following:

- **Encourage students, parents, and staff to get a yearly influenza vaccine.**
- **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick or until 24 hours after fever has resolved (without the use of fever-reducing medicines). You will help prevent others from catching your illness. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after use and wash your hands. If a tissue is not available, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve, not your hand.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially before eating and after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.
- **Educate students, parents, and staff the signs and symptoms of influenza and what to do if they identify illness**

For questions or to report an outbreak of influenza please contact CDPHE at 303-692-2700, or your local health department.

Guidance for school administrators to help reduce the spread of influenza in K-12 schools is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/guidance.htm>

Additional influenza related information for schools and child care providers can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm>

Colorado influenza surveillance data reports (updated weekly from October through May) are posted at: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/influenza-data>

