



## Instructions for parents of children at high risk for flu complications

**Children at High Risk for Flu Complications:** Children with chronic health problems including respiratory disease (notably asthma), cardiovascular disease, diabetes and immunosuppression are at higher risk of having complications from flu. In addition, pregnant women, the elderly and all children younger than 5 years old. If you are not sure if any of your household members are at higher risk for flu complications, please check with a doctor.

### Tips for keeping children at high risk for flu complications from getting sick with the flu:

- Teach children the following steps to help them avoid getting sick with flu:
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel containing at least 60% alcohol
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue in the trash after using it. Using your elbow is better than sneezing into the air if you did not find tissue
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; germs spread this way
- **Keep your child away from people who are sick.**
- **Disinfect surfaces regularly.**
- When there is flu in your community, consider your child's risk of exposure if they attend public gatherings. In communities with a lot of flu, **people who are at risk of complications from flu should consider staying away from public gatherings.**



- If flu is severe in your community, talk to your doctor and child's school to **develop a plan on how to handle your child's special needs.**
- **Get your child vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

### **Recognize if your children are sick:**

- Some children may not be able to tell you about their symptoms, which can result in a delay in responding to their illness. It is important to **watch carefully** for the signs and symptoms of flu or unusual behavior that may be a sign your child is sick.
- **Symptoms of flu** include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and fatigue. A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, your child might have a fever if he or she feels warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
- Watch out for **emergency warning signs** and visit the nearest health care provider urgently if one of the following emergency warning signs develops:
  - Fast, difficult, or trouble breathing or shortness of breath
  - Bluish or gray skin or lips color
  - Not drinking enough fluids
  - Not urinating or no tears when crying
  - Severe or persistent vomiting
  - Sudden dizziness
  - Confusion
  - Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
  - Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough



- Not waking up, not interacting, or being so irritable that the child does not want to be held

### **Tips for taking care of high risk children with the flu:**

- **Contact your doctor** immediately if your child is sick. This is important because the antiviral medicines used to treat flu work best when started within the first 2 days of getting sick. Your doctor will tell you what special care is needed for your child.
- Keep your child at home for 7 days and until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of fever without the use of medication (Note: you should also stay at home for 7 days if you are sick). Make sure they stay at home unless they need to go to the doctor.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- If your child has a fever, use fever-reducing medicines that your doctor recommends based on your child's age. Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) should not be given to children or teenagers who have flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.
- Keep your child in a room separate from the common areas of the house. (For example, a spare bedroom with its own bathroom, if that's possible.) Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible.
- Have the sick person wear a facemask if they need to be in a common area of the house near other persons.

For updates and information on H1N1 call the National H1N1 hotline number (800 358) or visit HAAD's website ([www.haad.ae/h1n1](http://www.haad.ae/h1n1))