



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, Hawaii 96801-3378

August 2009

Dear Parents:

With students returning to school this month, the Department of Health would like to provide you tips on what to do to help protect your child and others from catching influenza (the flu):

- **Get vaccinated**
 - ✓ Vaccination is the best way to protect your child against the flu.
 - ✓ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise **all** children ages 6 months through 18 years receive a seasonal flu vaccine every year.
 - ✓ If your elementary or middle school participates in the Stop Flu at School Program, sign your child up to receive the *seasonal* flu vaccine.
 - ✓ If a vaccine against the novel A (H1N1) flu virus (formerly swine flu) becomes available this fall, we will update you through your school about this important extra protection for your child.

- **Prevent the spread of germs** – Remind your child to:
 - ✓ Cover his/her nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue into the trash after using it.
 - ✓ Wash his/her hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners may also help kill germs.
 - ✓ Avoid touching his/her eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs enter the body this way.
 - ✓ Stay away from people who are sick.

- **Stay home if you are sick**
 - ✓ Keep your child home from school if he/she is sick until he/she is free of fever or feverishness without the use of fever-reducing medicines for at least 24 hours.
 - ✓ While he/she is sick, keep him/her away from others to avoid spreading their germs.
 - ✓ Contact your doctor for advice on care of your child while sick, but especially if he/she has trouble breathing, cannot keep down any fluids, seems very confused, becomes unresponsive, or has any other symptoms that concern you.
 - ✓ Also check with your child's doctor if your child has other health problems, such as diabetes, asthma or other lung diseases, or immune system problems, which may place him/her at higher risk for serious illness from flu.

For more information on the flu, call 2-1-1 (7-1-1 for hearing impaired) or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/parents/index.htm>. Reducing the spread of germs in schools is important for the health of our children and our community. By practicing healthy habits, we can help to stop the spread of germs at school and contribute to a stronger, healthier Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.
Director of Health