

# INFLUENZA:

## Information for Schools on Influenza and Vaccines



Updated February 2020

### What is influenza or “the flu”?

The flu is a potentially-severe respiratory illness caused by flu viruses that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. There are many different flu viruses that can make people sick. The flu is very contagious and spreads easily by coughing and sneezing. Millions of people get the flu every year. Many people get very sick, and some even die.

### What are the symptoms of the flu?

People who have the flu often get sick very quickly and can have symptoms that include a high fever, cough, sore throat, muscle or body aches, fatigue or chills. Some people who have the flu have NO symptoms at all, but they can still spread the flu to others.

### Is flu vaccine recommended for children in schools?

YES. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommend that all children 6 months of age and older receive flu vaccine every year to help them stay healthy.

➤ **DID YOU KNOW? Flu vaccine is the BEST way to protect children and adults from getting the flu. It also protects against complications if you do get the flu.**

### How can students and staff be protected from the flu?

Students and staff can protect themselves by getting a flu vaccine and encouraging others to get vaccinated—parents, teachers, secretaries, and other support staff. The flu vaccine protects against the flu by creating antibodies that fight against different flu viruses.

➤ **DID YOU KNOW? Every year, schools in Michigan close because too many students and staff are out sick with the flu.**

### What kinds of flu vaccine can students get?

Both the flu shot and nasal spray flu vaccine will be available for school-aged children. Consult with a healthcare provider to determine which flu vaccine is best for your child.

➤ **DID YOU KNOW? The decision to recommend flu vaccines is an example of using science and data to help improve the public’s health.**

### How often should a flu vaccine be given?

Flu vaccines change from year to year, so children and adults need to get a flu vaccine every year to be protected. A healthcare provider can help determine if a child needs one or two doses of flu vaccine. CDC recommends that every person should get a flu vaccine by the end of October.

➤ **DID YOU KNOW? It is safer to get the flu vaccine than it is to get the flu. Don’t underestimate the health risks from flu!**

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) makes recommendations for who should receive the flu vaccine each year. Visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) for more information. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, religion, color, height, weight, marital status, genetic information, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political beliefs or disability.

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