

FLU CAN BE ANYWHERE

Influenza.
Don't get it.
Don't give it.

Health information for staff, parents and caregivers

Dr Annette Nesdale, Medical Officer of Health, Regional Public Health - 25 June 2019

Several schools and early child education centres (ECC) in the greater Wellington region have had influenza outbreaks. The outbreaks have resulted in ~30% absenteeism on the worst days, which is disruptive and stressful for families and affected schools/centres.

The main symptoms of influenza are:

- fever
- cough
- sometimes vomiting or diarrhoea in younger children.

Symptoms usually last three to four days, but can last up to seven days.

The following information will help you to support your school/centre to reduce the spread of influenza.

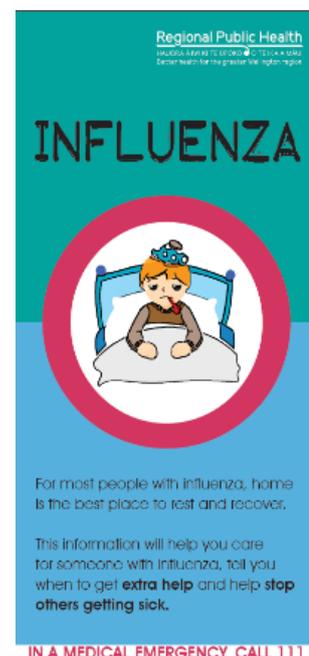
Parents should:

- **Advise a staff member if their child has any of the flu like symptoms listed above.**
- **Keep sick children at home until they are feeling well and are free from symptoms (usually three to four days but up to seven days).**
- **Keep their children away from social or sporting events, school productions or camps. This is so they can rest and recover and don't spread illness to others.**
- **Check that their child's school/ECC has their correct and up-to-date contact details in case they need to be contacted.**

If anyone in your family has influenza, we ask that they don't visit hospitals or community care homes, or see people who may be at high risk of serious illness such as pregnant women, babies or anyone who has cancer, or lung, heart, or kidney conditions.

Take care: it is important to use tissues to cover coughs and sneezes and to be very good about washing and drying hands thoroughly. An [influenza brochure](#) accessible at www.rph.org.nz/influenza has some good tips for looking after people with influenza and stopping it spreading to other people at home.

A note on meningococcal disease: Initially, meningococcal disease can look like influenza. *It's important to know the signs and symptoms because it can develop very quickly.* It can be treated with antibiotics but early treatment is critical.



Meningococcal Disease causes Meningitis

Don't wait – take action

Even if you think the person has been immunised.

- Meningococcal disease is fast and can kill or cause serious disability.
- Get help **immediately** if you see one or more of the symptoms below.
- These meningococcal disease symptoms may not all show at once.

Symptoms in babies		Symptoms in older children and adults	
 High fever (may also have cool hands and feet or shivering)	 Sleepy or floppy or harder to wake	 High fever and headache	 Confusion and sleepiness
 Unusual crying	 Stiff neck	 Joint pain and aching muscles	 Stiff neck
 Dislike bright lights	 Vomiting	 Dislike bright lights	 Vomiting
 Refusal to feed	 Sometimes, red or purple spots or bruises on the skin	 Sometimes, red or purple spots or bruises on the skin	

Not everyone with meningococcal disease gets spots. Don't wait for spots to appear before getting medical help.



You can call Healthline free 24 hours a day: **0800 611 116**

This brochure is available on HealthEd in English, Māori, Sāmoan and Tongan.

<https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/meningococcal-disease-dont-wait-take-action>

Meningococcal vaccines to protect against meningitis are available in New Zealand, but are not free.

- Two vaccines are needed to protect against the most common strains (B, W, C, Y, A).
- Protection from the vaccine lasts from three to five years.
- If you're interested in immunisation, talk to your doctor or nurse about the availability and cost of vaccines.