

**CIRCULAR TO PARENTS OF PreKG to Grade 12**

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**SUB: FLU AWARENESS**

Dear Parents,

Seasonal influenza is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses, which circulates the world affecting all age groups. Seasonal influenza lay serious burden on students health and academic achievement. The disease can be prevented by taking influenza vaccine every year.

Kindly find the attached brochures and guidelines from DHA. It contains educational materials regarding influenza which will help you better understand the disease and cope with measures in prevention of seasonal Influenza.

For your kind information and care.

Regards,



Arundhati Rawat  
Principal



هيئة الصحة بدبي  
DUBAI HEALTH AUTHORITY



# Influenza



Fight Influenza,  
it starts with you

## What is seasonal influenza?

Seasonal influenza is an acute viral infection that spreads easily among humans in all age groups. It mainly affects the respiratory system, especially the nose, throat and lungs. It is transmitted by inhaling the droplets when coughing, sneezing or interacting with an infected person. It can also spread by touching surfaces or substances contaminated with the influenza virus and then touching the eyes, mouth or nose. The severity of infection ranges from mild to severe and can sometimes lead to death.

## What are the symptoms of influenza?

-  Sudden rise in body temperature
-  Dry cough
-  Feeling tired and fatigue
-  Body ache and muscles pain
-  Runny or blocked nose
-  Sore throat
-  Headache
-  Vomiting or diarrhea, especially in children

## What are the complications of influenza?

Most people with influenza recover within a few days to around two weeks, however, some people can develop complications such as:

-  Pneumonia & bronchitis or bronchiolitis
-  Inflammation of the ears or sinuses
-  Further deterioration in the health condition of people with chronic disease that could become critical

## How can you protect yourself from influenza?

The best way to prevent influenza and avoid serious complications is to get the influenza vaccine every year, other preventive measures recommended to reduce the spread of infection are:

- Washing the hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing and coughing
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces regularly and avoiding touching the eyes or mouth immediately after touching contaminated surfaces
- Avoiding contact with infected people

## What is the influenza vaccine?

It is a vaccine that contains an inactivated virus (Ineffective in causing disease) that is once taken, triggers the immune system to produce antibodies to the virus, this may take up to two weeks, after which the body acquires immunity to protect itself against the seasonal influenza virus infection.



## When should you get the influenza vaccine?

It is advisable to take the influenza vaccine once a year before the winter season, between September and October, but it is also possible to take the vaccine at any time until March to avoid getting the influenza viruses still circulating in the community.

## Why do you need to vaccinate against influenza every year?

The influenza viruses are constantly exposed to multiple mutations, causing the virus to change its shape every year, and emerging new strains that deceive the human immune system. Therefore in order to keep pace with these changes, influenza vaccines are developed annually to suit the strains that spread every winter.

## Who can take the Influenza vaccine?

Vaccination can be given to anyone 6 months or older, but the following groups are more likely to have Influenza complications and should be vaccinated:

- Children aged 6 months to 5 years
- Adults over 65 years of age
- Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy
- People with a weakened immune system due to diseases or medications (such as cancer patients, people with HIV / AIDS and those taking immune-suppressant treatment)
- People with chronic diseases such as asthma / heart disease / diabetes / kidney and liver diseases
- Healthcare workers
- Travelers to Hajj and Umrah

## What are the contraindications for taking the Influenza vaccine?

- Infants under the age of 6 months
- People who are allergic to any component of the vaccine, or who have had an allergic reaction to it in the past
- People with severe or mild symptoms, with or without fever

## Is the Influenza vaccine safe?

The Influenza vaccine is a safe vaccination with minor side effects that can include:

- Mild pain, redness or swelling at the injection site
- Mild fever
- Sore throat
- Mild body aches

## Where can you get the Influenza vaccine?

The Influenza vaccine is provided at all DHA primary healthcare centres and private healthcare providers

## **Seasonal Influenza: Guide for parents**

**Dear Parents,**

As influenza seasons take place each year in fall and winter, this guide is prepared to help you be more aware of how to protect yourself, your children and your whole family from influenza.

**Seasonal influenza** is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses, which circulate in all parts of the world affecting all age groups. It is characterized by a sudden onset of fever, cough (usually dry), headache, muscle and joint pain, sore throat and a runny or blocked nose.

**The following advice is important to avoid getting seasonal influenza:**

### **1. Protect your children by getting the seasonal influenza vaccine every year**

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent the disease

### **2. Personnel hygiene habits to keep your children healthy**

- ✓ Washing the hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- ✓ Covering coughs and sneezes with tissue or by coughing into the inside of the elbow
- ✓ Avoiding touching the eyes, nose, or mouth immediately after touching contaminated surfaces
- ✓ Avoiding close contact with sick people
- ✓ **Be sure to set a good example by doing all the above by yourself**

### **3. Keep your sick child at home, if he/she develops these symptoms:**

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea

- ✓ General malaise or feeling of fatigue, weakness or muscle ache
- ✓ Frequent dry or wet cough
- ✓ Runny or blocked nose

**If your child is diagnosed with influenza, please make sure you provide the school doctor/nurse with the clinic/hospital case report and the laboratory results if available.**

- 1. Don't send your child back to school, until he/she has fully recovered from the illness (24 hours after being fever free without using fever-reducing medications)**

Finally, we would like to reiterate the importance of informing the teacher or school doctor/nurse if your child got a serious illness, or has been admitted to the hospital.