

MILLS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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Public Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Your Child Has the Flu: What Now?

Keeping a sick child home is important

Keeping a sick child home from school or daycare is always important to help control the spread of viruses; but for many parents, taking time off from work is difficult. How can parents tell if their child is ill enough to stay home? How can they balance their work responsibilities with the care their child needs?

“Having an ill child at home can be challenging,” said Sheri Bowen, Agency Administrator at Mills County Public Health. “By planning ahead, parents can arrange to make child care easier for everyone. Bowen says parents can contact others in the neighborhood or parents from their children’s classroom to make prior arrangements for ill children. For example, parents can stagger their time off from work by arranging for several children to go to one parent’s home one day, and someone else’s the next. “If you have several ill children in one home, it’s a good idea to keep them in separate rooms if possible,” said Bowen. “This will help stop the spread of any additional viruses circulating among the kids.”

How do you know if a child is ill enough to stay home from school? The symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people with novel influenza A (H1N1) may vomit or have diarrhea. Children with these symptoms should stay home, and should not return to school or daycare until they have been fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours.

For more information on caring for an ill person in your home, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm.

A statewide toll-free hotline has been established for public questions about seasonal and H1N1 influenza at 1-800-447-1985. More information can also be found at www.idph.state.ia.us.

