

Date:	January 5, 2026
To:	Licensed Childcare Facility Operators
From:	Northern Health Chief Medical Health Officer Northern Health Medical Health Officers
CC:	Northern Health Licensing Team
RE:	2026-01-05 Memo on Influenza to Licensed Childcare Facilities

Staying healthy during flu season in Northern Health communities

Flu Season is here

Levels of influenza are rising in Northern Health, especially among children. Influenza (the flu) is an infection that mainly affects the nose, throat, and lungs. It is caused by influenza A and B viruses which spread every year from November to April. H3N2 is the main type of influenza virus that is spreading this year, and it can cause more severe illness especially in children and older adults. This makes it extra important to be protected from influenza this season.

Signs and symptoms

Infection with influenza can range from mild to severe. Common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Extreme tiredness
- Cough, sneezing, runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

Getting sick with influenza can also lead to serious diseases, like pneumonia (which affects the lungs), and life-threatening complications.

How influenza spreads

Influenza spreads through coughing, sneezing, close contact, and by touching surfaces with influenza germs and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Who is at higher risk?

Some people are more likely to get very sick from influenza. This includes:

- Adults over 65 years old
- Children under 5 years old
- People who are pregnant
- People with chronic health conditions

Vaccines are the best protection from the flu

Influenza vaccine is the safest and most effective protection from influenza. It's free for everyone 6 months and older in BC. You can get it at health units, pharmacies, or some doctor's offices. Even though this year's vaccine isn't a perfect match to the H3N2 influenza virus, it still helps prevent severe illness and hospitalization and protect against other types of influenza viruses.

- *Register and book online through the BC Get Vaccinated system or by calling 1-833-838-2323*

Other ways to stay healthy

- Keep sick kids home until they feel better
- Wash hand often with soap or sanitizer
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Throw away used tissues right away
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often
- Wear a mask if you can't avoid others while sick

These measures also help prevent illness from other viruses, such as COVID-19, RSV, and parainfluenza.

If your kids get sick

Have your kids stay home, rest, and avoid close contact with other people until they feel better and their fever is gone. Call your health care provider if your child has a health condition that increases their risk of getting very sick, or if they are very ill (such as having trouble breathing, chest pain, or signs of dehydration like dizziness, extreme sleepiness, or not peeing much).

Helpful links[Book your vaccine](#)[Health Link BC](#)[Common Childhood Diseases: Quick Guide](#)

Sincerely,

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