

Office of Child Welfare Programs

Lois Ann Day, Director of Child Welfare Programs
Heidi Beaubriand, RN, BSN

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Issue date: 1/15/15

Topic: Other

Subject: Flu Season Precautions

Applies to (check all that apply):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All DHS employees | <input type="checkbox"/> County Mental Health Directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area Agencies on Aging | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging and People with Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Office of Developmental |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children, Adults and Families | Disabilities Services (ODDS) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County DD Program Managers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>): Child Welfare transmittals group |

Message: The CDC is predicting a severe flu season for 2015. Already more than 20 children across the country have died as a result of influenza (including 7 children in Washington). It is important that branch offices and field staff take necessary precautions to prevent influenza for themselves and the children we serve.

Although the CDC has informed us that the flu vaccine is less effective this year because the flu strain has mutated, they are still recommending that a flu vaccine be obtained to provide some coverage. A flu vaccine is also part of the yearly vaccination schedule for children in foster care.

Frequent hand washing is encouraged as it is the first line of defense against influenza. This should also be encouraged for those coming into the branch offices for visitation.

Visitation room surfaces should be wiped down with an antibacterial cleaner between visits to prevent the spread of influenza. Toys and books should be limited to those that can be wiped down.

Finally, if you are exhibiting flu symptoms it is recommended that you stay home until symptoms subside.

Flu symptoms include the following:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

** It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

If you have any questions about this information, contact:

Contact(s):	Heidi Beaubriand, RN, BSN		
Phone:	503-947-1187	Fax:	
Email:	Heidi.beaubriand@state.or.us		