



# English

October 2009

To: Parents/Guardians-

This informational packet is regarding the seasonal flu and the pandemic H1N1 flu. It is important for parents/guardians and Kidango staff to work together in ensuring the health and safety of children, families and our community. Please read through this packet to understand these flu viruses, the preventative measures Kidango is taking to keep children and staff healthy, and what you can do in your own homes to help.

The following items are included in this packet:

- 1) Questions and Answers
- 2) Flu Prevention Tips for Parents & Guardians
- 3) *When to Keep Your Child at Home Checklist*

Additional resources are available upon request. Please talk to your Center Director if you would like additional resources or visit [www.kidango.org](http://www.kidango.org)

Sincerely,  
Kidango's Education Team

## **Questions and Answers<sup>1</sup>**

### **1) What types of flu should we be concerned about?**

- a. Seasonal flu- seasonal flu outbreaks are caused by viruses that have been in communities before and they usually happen every year during the winter months.
- b. Pandemic H1N1 flu- A new flu virus that started making people ill in April 2009 and was initially called "Swine Flu." Now that it is a world-wide flu outbreak and spreads easily, it is considered a pandemic flu. Symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, diarrhea and vomiting.

### **2) Why should we be concerned about the seasonal flu and the pandemic H1N1?**

Both types of flu viruses are expected to cause illness this school year. The virus spreads person to person, most often hand to hand or through droplets in the air from a cough/sneeze. Viruses are known to change and mutate as they move along populations, which could cause severe illness among large groups and overwhelm community resources.

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<sup>1</sup> This information is from the Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital Systems and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### 3) What is Kidango doing to ensure the health and safety of child(ren) and staff?

Kidango employees are trained in Preventative Health Practices and implement Universal Precautions as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). They are doing the following to ensure the health and safety of children and staff:

- a. Mandating that anyone entering a center (other than just signing-in or out) will be asked by center staff to wash their hands. This is a new mandatory requirement until flu season ends in March 2010.
- b. Encouraging staff to get vaccinated for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu (if recommended) when vaccines become available.
- c. Encouraging parents to have children (6 months of age and older) vaccinated for seasonal flu and H1N1, when the vaccines become available. Children under the age of 5 years are at higher risk for flu complications. Please speak with your family physician about the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine directly. You can visit the following website for additional information as well.  
[http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/public/vaccination\\_qa\\_pub.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/public/vaccination_qa_pub.htm)
- d. Educating and encouraging staff, children and visitors to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Children are being instructed as to where tissues can be found and how to use their upper arm to cover their mouths and noses if tissues are not available.
- e. Practicing good hand hygiene and providing the time and supplies for staff and children to wash their hands as often as necessary. Our staff is actively helping children wash their hands frequently.
- f. Performing a daily health check of children and staff when they arrive at the child care program. Please make sure parent/guardian and emergency contact information is up-to-date so we can contact you or your emergency contact to pick up your child if he or she becomes sick. If you or your emergency contact is called, your child should be picked up within one hour of the call, to help prevent the spread of illness to other children and staff.
- g. If children or employees have flu-like symptoms, they are kept in a separate, but supervised, space until they can go home. We are also limiting the number of employees who take care of sick children.
- h. Asking parents and staff to keep themselves and children home if they have flu-like illness.
- i. Frequently cleaning surfaces and items that children touch with their hands, mouths, and body fluids such as toys, diaper stations, chairs, or playground equipment.
- j. We may decide to temporarily close the program if there are a lot of flu cases in the community. Please consider alternate child care arrangements in case we need to close temporarily. Check with your employer to find out if they will allow you to stay at home to care for your children. Ask if you can work from home. If this is not possible, start planning for other ways to care for your children at home.

## **Flu Prevention Tips for Parents & Guardians<sup>2</sup>**

### **Plan now for the flu season:**

- Make plans NOW for home care for children that become ill with the flu.
- Talk to your employer about how you will manage if you or your child becomes ill.
- Check with your child's teachers and child care providers about home learning activities.
- Discuss with friends and family who would care for your child if you become ill. Update emergency contacts.
- Discuss special plans with your health care provider for your child or household members who have chronic medical conditions like asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, etc. because they are at higher risk of severe illness and complications from the flu.

### **Teach your children healthy habits:**

- Cough and sneeze into a sleeve or upper arm, not hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after toileting and before eating. Use a hand sanitizer if water is not available. Children need coaching (rub and scrub all surfaces for 20 seconds) on proper hand washing until about 8 years of age.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Tell you or their caregiver if they feel sick.

### **Keep your child home if they are sick with the flu:**

- Keep them home for at least 24 hours after they are fever free (without the use of fever reducing medications).
- Do not send a sick child to another group child care program.
- Signs of flu are: fever with a cough or sore throat.
- Call your health care provider for advice on caring for an ill child or family member.
- Discuss exclusion guidelines with your child care provider.
- Notify your child care provider as soon as possible if your child is being kept home because of flu so teachers can watch for signs of illness in the other children.

### **Plan to get the seasonal flu shot AND the pandemic flu vaccine when it becomes available**

- Annual seasonal flu vaccines are recommended for everyone, especially children ages 6 months to 18 years, people over age 50 or those with underlying medical conditions, and caregivers of children birth through 5 years.
- Pandemic H1N1 (swine) flu vaccine, as it becomes available, is strongly recommended for:
  - Pregnant women (to reduce complications and to protect their babies)
  - People caring for infants under 6 months of age (to protect unimmunized babies)
  - Health care workers
  - All people from 6 months to 24 years (younger people seem to be getting the H1N1 flu more often)
  - People ages 25 to 64 with chronic medical conditions like asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, etc.

### **Additional Resources**

- Information about Flu Viruses: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)
  - Español: [http://espanol.pandemicflu.gov/pandemicflu/enes/24/\\_www\\_flu\\_gov/](http://espanol.pandemicflu.gov/pandemicflu/enes/24/_www_flu_gov/)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
  - Español: <http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>
- Alameda County Public Health Department: [www.acphd.org](http://www.acphd.org)
- Santa Clara County Public Health Department: [www.sccphd.org/portal/site/phd/](http://www.sccphd.org/portal/site/phd/)

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<sup>2</sup> A resource from the City of Berkeley Public Health Division.

## **When to Keep Your Child at Home**<sup>3</sup>

The symptoms of Pandemic H1N1 2009 (swine) flu include **fever with a cough or sore throat**, and sometimes body aches, headache, chills, and feeling tired. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting.

The most important thing that you can do to keep flu from spreading in the community is to **Keep your sick child at home**. The following check list will also help decide if you or someone in your family may have the flu:

- Yes**  **No** Does your child have a fever of 100 °F or more?
- Yes**  **No** Does your child have a cough?
- Yes**  **No** Does your child have a sore throat?
- Yes**  **No** Does your child have a headache, body aches or chills?
- Yes**  **No** Does your child have vomiting or diarrhea?

### **Should I Keep My Child Home?**

If you checked "yes" to fever of 100 °F or more and cough or sore throat, your child has an influenza-like illness. Keep your child home until they have been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

If you checked "yes" to only one of the questions above, or if your child is ill with any of the other symptoms, keep your child at home at least one day to observe for other symptoms. Standard exclusion guidelines for child care apply. If other symptoms develop, use the checklist questions again to decide whether to continue keep the child home. Send your child back to child care after he or she has been completely well for 24 hours.

### **Children with Chronic Health Conditions**

Children and adults at high risk for complications (lung, heart, and liver disease; diabetes; compromised immune system) should call their health care provider at the first sign of illness. Early treatment with anti-virals could prevent hospitalization and death.

### **If Flu Severity Increases**

More caution will be recommended if the H1N1 flu becomes more severe causing serious illness in many people who become infected. Recommendations for work, school, and other group settings will be based upon the most effective means to reduce the spread of illness in the community. Things may continue to change as we learn more.

**Please note:** During flu season these policies will supersede the policies documented in the Parent Handbook.

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<sup>3</sup> A resource from the City of Berkeley Public Health Division.