



## Help Wipe Out Flu

As a parent of young children, you'll likely do lots of wiping this winter. You'll wipe crayon off the wall. You'll wipe runny noses. You'll wipe away tears. And you'll wipe your share of dirty bottoms. Why not try to wipe out the threat of flu against your children, too?

You may not know it, but flu takes a big toll on children. About 20,000 children younger than 5 end up in the hospital each year because of flu. During a bad flu season, as many as 1 in 5 kids may have to see the doctor or visit the ER or other urgent care center for treatment from the flu. And sadly, about 100 children die from flu complications each year.

The good news is that a few simple steps can go a long way towards keeping flu out of your child's life.

Your first step should be to get yourself and your loved ones vaccinated. "A flu vaccine is the best way to protect against the flu and this year, there is an all-time high supply of vaccine," says Dr. Nancy Cox, Director of the Influenza Division at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The flu vaccine protects against three flu viruses and can cross-protect against other flu viruses also.

Second, make sure to take and teach your child everyday actions that can help stop the spread of germs. This includes covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue and frequent and thorough hand washing. (Just wiping won't do when it comes to hand washing!) Also, remember that germs can spread by touching the eyes, nose or mouth.

And third, if you or your child do get flu symptoms, there are antiviral drugs that can treat the flu. These prescription drugs should be started within 48 hours of getting sick. So be on the lookout for symptoms, including a fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches. And of course, as always, if you or your child is sick stay home to keep from getting others sick too.

"Antiviral drugs are an important second line of defense against the flu. Your healthcare provider will decide whether you should take flu antiviral drugs," explains Dr. Cox.

So take these steps and help wipe out the flu!

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu),  
or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6358 (TTY).