



# FIRST RESPONDERS

## PROTECTION AT WORK

Flu season typically runs from October through May, but with the appearance of 2009 novel H1N1 influenza and the threat of other flu viruses emerging, local public health officials recommend taking steps to help protect yourself, your family and our community throughout the year.

### Protect Your Family

Develop a plan for what you will do if your child's school or daycare is closed due to a disease outbreak. Talk to your employer about flexible work hours in case you are sick or need to be home caring for sick family members. Store enough food, water and medicine at home to allow you to stay in for at least seven days. Establish family practices of good hand washing and not sharing personal items. Get your family vaccinated against seasonal flu each year.

### Protect Yourself

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially after using the bathroom, after touching common surfaces or items and before eating or drinking. Keep a distance of at least six feet from people who are sick. Choose a healthy lifestyle that will build your immunity, such as getting adequate sleep, drinking plenty of water, eating nutritious foods and staying physically active.

### Protect Our Community

If you have a fever or are sick, stay home. Keep your children home from school or daycare if they are running a fever. Giving them fever-reducing medication may make them more comfortable, but it does not stop them from being contagious to others, so don't take them back to school or daycare until they have been without a fever for at least 24 hours. Cover your cough and sneeze with a disposable tissue or the crook of your arm. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, and don't share personal items with others.

### On the Job

When you must be in close contact with someone who appears sick, try to keep your interaction short. Try not to be face-to-face. Ask the person to wear a mask, cover their cough and wash their hands frequently. Avoid touching your own eyes, nose and mouth. Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer as soon as possible.

The effectiveness of respirators and facemasks in preventing transmission of flu viruses is not known. Use by first responders is not generally recommended, but could be considered under certain circumstances. Contact your local public health department for specific guidance.