

**PLAN
PREPARE
PRACTICE**

Advice for Parents Talking to Your Child About Pandemic H1N1 Influenza

Understanding Stress in Children

- Children may have difficulty understanding and coping with stress related to H1N1.
- Stressful situations often cause children to worry.
- Children may wonder “why” this is happening and how it can be fixed.
- It is important to take care of your health and well-being in order to help your child deal with stressful situations.
- If you cope with stressful situations well, your children will cope better.
- Your confidence and calm attitude will help ease the worries of your children and make them feel safe and secure.

Helpful Tips

- Keep activities as consistent and normal as possible even if your normal routine changes (due to daycare or school closure).
- Ask your children what they have learned about H1N1.
- Answer questions openly and honestly at a level they can understand.
- Be concrete and do not avoid difficult questions.
- Let them know it is okay to be afraid or mad.
- Give them more affection and attention to help their uncertainty and fear.
- Limit exposure to media and adult conversations about H1N1.
- Encourage healthy behaviors such as eating and sleeping well and being physically active.
- Empower your children by helping them focus on what they can do:
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds (Sing “Happy Birthday” twice).
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue and throw it away immediately.
 - Stay away from people who are sick.
 - Stay home from school when sick.



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