

Keeping Babies Safe From Flu



Swine flu (novel H1N1) is a new influenza virus strain spreading around the world and causing illness in much the same way as the seasonal flu viruses we see in Wyoming every year. Typical symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches and fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting. Babies may not have all of these symptoms. They may have a fever, and be sluggish and may not respond to you as usual. Babies who get any flu are at risk for serious complications.

Parents and caregivers need flu vaccines:

- ✓ Vaccines are the single most effective weapon we have to fight flu.
- ✓ However, flu vaccines are not approved for babies under 6 months old.
- ✓ If you are a parent or caregiver for a baby younger than 6 months, you should get vaccinated against BOTH swine (novel H1N1) flu and seasonal flu to help protect yourself AND your baby.
- ✓ Influenza vaccines are safe with a proven track record of safety.

Feeding your baby if you have the flu:

- ✓ Whether you are breastfeeding or giving your baby formula, a cautious approach can help protect your baby.
- ✓ If possible, ask someone who is not sick to help feed and care for your baby.
- ✓ You do not need to stop breastfeeding, but it is a good idea to pump and have someone else give your milk to your baby.
- ✓ It is safe to take medicine to treat the flu while you are breastfeeding.
- ✓ Try to wear a facemask to keep from spreading flu to your baby.

Other ways to help protect your baby:

- ✓ Keep your infant out of crowded areas and away from people who are sick.
- ✓ Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before handling your baby.
- ✓ Avoid sharing of toys and items that have been in infants' mouths.
- ✓ Wash items that have been in infants' mouths with soap and water.

More information online at www.health.wyo.gov 10/09



Commit to your health.