



**Department of Health**

Three Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908-5097

401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711  
[www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov)

December 7, 2012

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Over the last few days the number of flu cases in Rhode Island has increased greatly. In the past, when the flu has hit Rhode Island this hard at this time of year we faced very severe flu seasons.

The good news is that the flu vaccine being used this year is very effective. Everyone older than six months of age should be vaccinated against the flu. Flu vaccine will help you stay out of the doctor's office and the hospital, will help your children stay at school, and will help prevent the spread of the flu in your home.

**Where can you be vaccinated?**

Children and adults can be vaccinated at doctors' offices or at public clinics. Adults can also be vaccinated at pharmacies (for example, CVS, Rite Aid, or Walgreens).

For a list of public clinics, visit [www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov) or call the HEALTH Information Line (401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711). Staff on the HEALTH Information Line can direct you to a clinic where there is no charge for flu vaccination and where health insurance is not required.

**Other important tips to stay healthy**

- Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Flu is spread through coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands. Cover your coughs and sneezes to prevent others from getting sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.

**If you think you have the flu**

- Check with your doctor.
- Rest, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid using alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco.
- Consider using over-the-counter medicines such as Tylenol, ibuprofen, or aspirin to relieve symptoms. Children younger than 19 years old should **not** be given aspirin to treat the flu.
- Stay home from work or school until you have been fever-free (temperature less than 100.4°F/38°C) for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

If you have any questions about the flu or flu vaccine, call the HEALTH Information Line (401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711) or visit [www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov). I wish you and your family a happy, healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Fine".

Michael Fine, M.D.  
Director of Health