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KEEP YOUR TRICK-OR-TREATERS SAFE

Common sense can help keep children healthy

COLUMBUS – Parents can take common-sense steps to protect their children from exposure to flu while trick-or-treating this week, Ohio Department of Health Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. said today.

Children with fevers should stay home and refrain from trick-or-treating, Jackson said. It's also important to stay about six feet away from people who are coughing or sneezing as flu is thought to spread through the air by sick people who are coughing or sneezing.

While vaccination is the best way to protect oneself from flu, H1N1 vaccine is available only in limited supplies. Here are some other ways to protect yourself at Halloween or anytime:

- * Wash your hands frequently; alcohol-based hand sanitizers are effective if soap and water are not available.
- * Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- * Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth; germs are spread this way.
- * If you are sick, stay home from work, and keep sick children home from school, until fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medication.

“Common sense is your best defense,” Jackson said. “Protect your little ghosts and goblins from H1N1 influenza this year.”

For more information about H1N1 flu, visit the ODH Web site at <http://www.flu.ohio.gov> anytime or call the H1N1 information line at 1-800-866-1404 from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday.