



OFFICE OF HEALTH SERVICES
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Protecting Yourself and Your Family Influenza (Flu) Information for Parents

What is influenza (flu)?

Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease that can be prevented by immunization. It is not the same as the “stomach flu.” Flu is caused by a virus that attacks the nose, throat and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death.

What are the symptoms of influenza?

Influenza symptoms come on quickly in the form of fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, extreme tiredness, stuffed-up nose and body aches. These symptoms can be severe and put you in bed for several days.

What if you think your child has the flu?

- Keep your child home from school if they have a fever of 100 degrees F or greater. The student may also need to stay home if they have a sore throat and/or coughing that disrupts their daily activities and ability to concentrate.
- Have your child rest and drink lots of fluids.
- Antibiotics will not help a person recover from the flu because flu is caused by a virus, not a bacteria.
- Children may need fever reducing medications to keep their fever under control. Follow your child’s doctor’s instructions.
- If you are concerned that something does not seem right with your child, call your doctor or clinic.

What can you do to protect your child and family?

- Get vaccinated. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu shot every year.
- Avoid being exposed to others who are sick with a flu-like illness.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve.
- Clean your hands often - with soap and water or an alcohol-based, waterless hand sanitizer.
- Do not share drinking cups and straws.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (door knobs, refrigerator handles, phones, water faucets).

Call your child’s school if your child is home with an influenza-like illness. If you have any questions or concerns contact the nurse and/or health service at your child’s school.