

All About Influenza (Flu)

What is the flu? • When should my student stay home? • Who is at risk?

Get Educated About the Flu!

What is influenza (flu)?

Influenza (flu) is a respiratory disease caused by a virus that attacks the nose, throat, and lungs. It can be mild, but is sometimes severe and at times can be life threatening. **It is not the same as the “stomach flu.”**

What are the symptoms of flu?

Flu symptoms include fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, extreme tiredness, and body aches. These symptoms come on quickly and can be severe keeping you in bed for several days.

How is the flu different from a cold?

Colds are generally less serious than the flu. With a cold, you’re more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose, while the flu causes body aches, fever, and extreme fatigue. A person with a cold can usually keep up with their normal activities, but someone with the flu can’t. Colds usually do not result in serious health problems like pneumonia, bacterial infections, and hospitalization, but flu can.

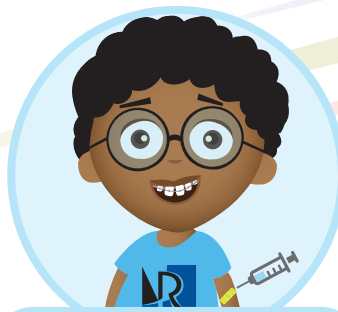
Minnesota Department of Health (www.mdhflu.com) “Fight the Flu” Prevention Strategies:



Cover Your Cough



Wash Your Hands



Get Vaccinated



Stay Home When Sick

| Students should <u>stay home</u> from school when: | Students <u>can return to</u> school when: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fever (100° or higher) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fever for 24 hours <u>without</u> the use of medication and well enough to participate in school |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vomiting or diarrhea | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours after the last episode <u>and</u> ability to keep food down |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rash | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No question of contagious illness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infection requiring antibiotics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 hours after first antibiotic dose or as directed by a physician |

Children at risk for serious complications from the flu include:

- Children age 6 months to 5 years
- Children and teens 5-18 years with:
 - Heart disease
 - Asthma or other Pulmonary disease
 - Metabolic disease (diabetes)
 - Immune deficiency
 - Blood disorders
 - Long-term aspirin therapy
- Teens who are pregnant during the flu season

How to Tell the Difference Between Influenza and a “Cold”

Learn the differences between influenza and the common cold. Call your health care provider right away if influenza is suspected in the family to see what treatment is needed. People sometimes call gastroenteritis the “flu” or “stomach flu.” It is not the same as seasonal influenza, which is a respiratory infection. However children, more commonly than adults, may complain of stomach aches with seasonal influenza. More information about gastroenteritis can be found at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001298/>.

*The following chart highlights information to help you compare symptoms of the common cold and seasonal influenza.

| Questions to ask concerning | Influenza Symptoms | Cold Symptoms |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Onset | Sudden | Gradual |
| Fever | High | None to Low Grade |
| Fatigue | Severe | Mild |
| Cough | Severe | Mild to Moderate |
| Throat | Sore | May be Sore |
| Headache | Achy | None |
| Appetite | Decreased | May be decreased |
| Muscles | Achy | No aches |
| Chills | Yes | None |
| Stuffy, runny nose | Sometimes | Common |
| Complications | Bronchitis/Pneumonia | Earache/Sinus Infection |
| Prevention | Annual vaccine | Frequent hand washing, good nutrition, stress management |
| Treatment | Antiviral medication within 24-48 hours | Symptomatic relief |