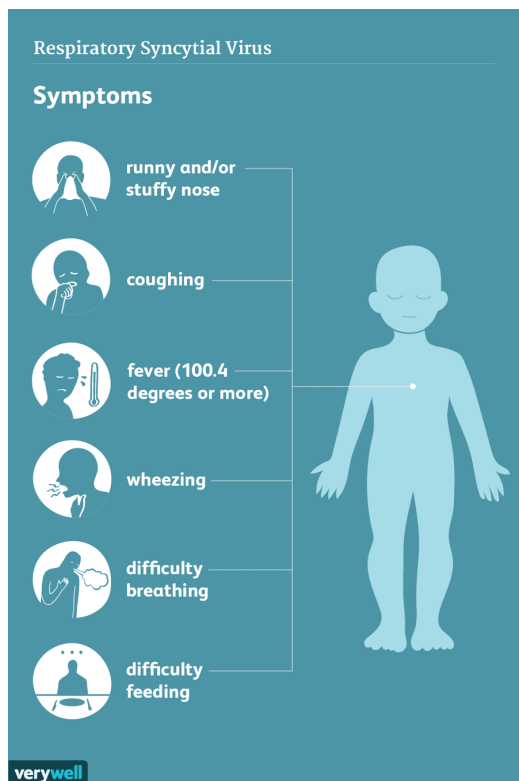


Meridian School Nurse Newsletter to Parents/Guardians



The winter of 2022-23 is shaping up to be a severe flu and respiratory virus season. Children in particular are getting sick with Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in large numbers this year, and hospitals are becoming overwhelmed. Respiratory viruses can spread through droplets in the air when a sick person coughs, sneezes, or talks near you. When we touch people who are sick or touch dirty surfaces, we contaminate our hands with germs. We can then infect ourselves with those germs by touching our faces.

Meridian Health School Nurses want to help you limit the spread of infections and keep your kids healthy this winter.

Teach Good Hand Hygiene

- Keeping your hands clean is the number one way to prevent the spread of infection. Lead by example and teach children to clean their hands after using the bathroom; after sneezing, blowing their nose, or coughing; before eating; after playing outdoors; when visiting someone who is sick; or whenever their hands are dirty.
- Pack hand wipes in lunch boxes so kids can easily clean their hands before eating.
- If your child attends daycare, look to see if there are enough sinks and hand sanitizer throughout the center and near the diaper changing areas. Notice if there are separate sinks for

food preparation and toileting and if hand hygiene information is posted throughout the facility. If not, speak up.

Practice Respiratory Etiquette

- Germs spread easily through the mucous membranes. Encourage children to keep their hands away from their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Teach kids to do the vampire cough: Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and clean your hands immediately afterward.
- Avoid being close to people who are coughing and sneezing.

Stay Home

- Keep children home from school or daycare if they are running a fever.
- Check in with other parents before birthday parties and playdates.
- Limit contact with sick individuals as much as possible.

Treatment

- Treatment for respiratory syncytial virus generally involves self-care measures to make your child more comfortable (supportive care), as most illness will resolve at home.
- Your doctor may recommend an over-the-counter medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) to reduce fever. (Never give aspirin to a child.) Use of nasal saline drops and suctioning may help clear a stuffy nose. Your doctor may prescribe antibiotics if there's a bacterial complication, such as bacterial pneumonia.
- Keep your child as comfortable as possible. Offer plenty of fluids and watch for signs of loss of body fluids (dehydration), such as dry mouth, little to no urine output, sunken eyes, and extreme fussiness or sleepiness.
- **SEEK EMERGENCY CARE WHEN THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS ARE PRESENT:** Breathing too hard to sleep or feed properly even when fever is not present * For infants, feeding has been significantly reduced below normal* Being excessively sleepy or difficult to wake* Not urinating in 12 hours * Patients with RSV infections will need to be hospitalized if they need: extra oxygen; intravenous fluids if they are dehydrated.

Keep it Clean

- RSV can live on the hands for up to 30 minutes but can survive for several hours on surfaces. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces like remote controls, light switches, computers, keyboards, door handles, and faucets, etc., on a regular basis.
- Use a bleach solution made with 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of room temperature water to clean surfaces such as countertops, sinks, toilets, and bathroom floors.
- Clean the toys of young children regularly with cleaning wipes, commercially prepared disinfectants, or a bleach solution. Some plastic toys can also be cleaned in the top rack of the dishwasher.

- Getting a flu shot each year is the best way to prevent the flu and to protect those around you. An annual flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older.
- Make sure you and your family members are up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations. Visit the CDC website to find out when you and your family members can get a COVID-19 booster.
- **Stay current on all your child's required and recommended vaccinations.**
- Host parties and playdates outdoors or in large spaces as much as possible.
- Encourage mask wearing in crowded indoor settings.
- Take rapid COVID-19 tests if you suspect you may have COVID-19 or if you or other household members have been exposed to COVID-19.

Helping keep our students, their families and our communities healthy!

Meridian School Nurses

Muncie Community Schools