



Influenza and Common Cold

CAUSE and DEFINITION:

- Influenza is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses
- The common cold is also a viral infection caused by other respiratory viruses such as rhinovirus, respiratory syncytial virus, human parainfluenza virus, adenovirus, and human metapneumovirus
- Because these two illnesses have similar symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference based on symptoms alone.
- Although very similar, flu symptoms are worse than the common cold and can include fever and chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and fatigue.

CHARACTERISTICS:

<u>Influenza</u>	<u>Common Cold</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever/Chills (100°F or higher)• Cough• Sore throat• Runny/stuffy nose• Body Aches/fatigue• Headache• Vomiting/Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sore throat• Runny nose• Coughing• Sneezing• Headaches• Body aches

INCUBATION / CONTAGION:

- Viruses can infect others from day 1 before feeling sick and can still infect 5-7 days after
- Symptoms should resolve in 10 days or less

MODE OF TRANSMISSION & CONTROL:

- Influenza and cold viruses are mostly spread person to person through coughing, sneezing, talking or close personal contact
- Less often spread through touching surfaces such as doorknobs or surfaces contaminated with the virus then touching your eyes, mouth, or nose
- Antiviral medications may be prescribed by your physician for confirmed cases of influenza, antibiotics do not work on viruses
- Annual influenza vaccines can help protect against getting the flu

HOME MANAGEMENT:

- Contact your child's physician for diagnosis and treatment especially if symptoms are severe or last more than 10 days
- Over the counter medications may help with symptoms, contact your pediatrician
- Good hand washing hygiene and cough etiquette (cough in elbow)

RETURN TO SCHOOL:

- May return to school if no fever for 24 hours without the use of medication
- Symptoms are mild and improving and student is able to participate in school activities