

How do you protect your children against the flu?

The best way to protect against the flu is for individuals, especially people at high risk for serious complications from the flu, to get a vaccination each fall. However, there are other good health habits that can help prevent the flu. These are:

- ⊗ Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- ⊗ If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- ⊗ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- ⊗ Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- ⊗ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



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What parents need to know about flu:

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Questions and Answers: Information for Parents

What is influenza (flu)?

"The flu" is caused by the influenza virus, which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

How does the flu spread?

Flu is typically spread person to person in the fluids from coughs and sneezes. Though much less frequent, the virus also can be spread when a person touches fluid droplets on another person or object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

- Fever
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches

Children can have additional stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, but these symptoms are uncommon in adults.

How long is a person with the flu virus contagious?

The period when an infected person is contagious depends on the age and health of the person. The healthier the person, the shorter time period they are contagious, usually 1 day prior to becoming sick and 5 days after they develop symptoms. Young children & people with weakened immune systems may be contagious for longer than a week.

What is the difference between a cold and the flu?

The flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. Because these two types of illnesses have similar flu-like symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense. Colds are usually milder than the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do

not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.


At what age should a child be vaccinated?

To protect their health, all children 6 months to 23 months old should be vaccinated against the flu. Children 2 years old and older who have underlying, long-term illness (such as heart or lung disease [like asthma], metabolic disease [like diabetes], kidney disease, a blood disorder, or a weakened immune system) should get a flu shot. The flu shot is not approved for use in children less than 6 months old.



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