

"Sick Day Guidelines: Making the Right Call When Your Child Has a Cold"

LIBERTY ELEMENTARY

Should I keep my child home or send him or her to school?

Consider keeping your child home if he or she:

- Has a fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Has been vomiting
- Has symptoms that prevent him or her from participating in school, such as:
 - Excessive tiredness or lack of appetite
 - Productive coughing, sneezing
 - Headache, body aches, earache
 - Sore throat

A minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but a severe sore throat could be strep throat even if there is no fever. Other symptoms of strep throat in children are headache and stomach upset. Contact your pediatrician as your child needs a special test to determine if it is strep throat.

Keep your child home until his or her fever has been gone for 24 hours without medication. Colds can be contagious for at least 48 hours. Returning to school too soon may slow the recovery process and expose others unnecessarily to illness.

Does my child have the flu?

- The flu is serious! Call your pediatrician at the first sign of flu symptoms, which typically **come on suddenly**, including:
 - High fever
 - Chills
 - Head ache, body aches, ear ache
 - Nausea, vomiting
 - Dry cough

If you're unsure about the best way to treat your child's cold or flu, ask your school nurse, doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider.

How do I make my child feel better?

- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and put limits on TV watching.
- Encourage fluids; like water, soup, juice, and ice.
- Help your child relax by reading him a story and giving him plenty of TLC.
- Consider using a cool humidifier.
- When used as directed, children's cough and cold medicines help relieve cough and cold symptoms while your child is getting better. Read and follow the directions carefully and give the exact recommended dose for the child's age. Do not use over-the-counter cough and cold medications for children under the age of four in the United States.

How can I prevent my child from getting a cold?

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands frequently using plenty of soap and warm water. Proper hand-washing should take about 20 seconds or the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
- Teach your child to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their sleeve.
- Keep the child's environment tobacco free.
- Try to minimize the time your child spends with other children who have cough or cold symptoms.
- Pack easy-to-use products like disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizers in your child's backpack to use when he or she is at school.
- Keep an annual well-child exam to follow changes in your child's health.
- Keep all of your child's immunizations up-to-date (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines now recommend a flu vaccine for most children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday).
- Serve a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables. Giving a daily vitamin may be recommended by your pediatrician.
- After your child is feeling better, clean all surfaces; wash the bedding and air out the room.
- Keep surfaces like door knobs, phones, remote controls, toys, and keyboards clean.
- Always make sure to consult your doctor or school nurse if you have any questions.

Source: National Association of School Nurses

Influenza Fact Sheet

What is influenza?

Influenza is commonly referred to as "the flu." It is a viral infection of the lungs. There are two main types of influenza virus: A and B. Each type includes many different strains.

When does influenza occur?

Influenza occurs most often in the late fall and winter months in the United States.

Who gets influenza? How is it spread?

Anyone can get influenza, but it is most serious in young children, the elderly, in people with chronic illnesses (e.g., lung disease, heart disease, cancer, or diabetes) or those with weak immune systems. Influenza spreads easily in discharges from the nose or throat, usually when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear? What are the symptoms of influenza?

Symptoms usually appear 1 to 3 days after exposure. Influenza symptoms can include a sudden onset of fever, headache, chills, cough, sore throat, and body aches. Diarrhea is not common. Although most people are ill for less than a week, some people have complications and may need to be hospitalized.

How is influenza diagnosed and treated?

Some laboratory tests are available to diagnose influenza; however, doctors usually diagnose influenza from the person's symptoms. Rest, liquids, and over-the-counter medicine (e.g., acetaminophen [Tylenol®]) are the usual treatments. Some prescription drugs may reduce the severity of influenza. Aspirin should not be given to children with fever-causing illnesses because of the possibility of a complication called Reye's syndrome.

How long can a person spread influenza?

Influenza can spread from one person to another beginning about one day before symptoms appear through about a week after onset.

Who should be vaccinated against influenza?

All persons who want to reduce the risk of becoming ill with influenza or of transmitting it to others (and do not have a contraindication) should receive an influenza vaccination each year. Yearly vaccination is important because: 1) influenza strains change from year to year, and 2) immunity gained from the vaccine decreases over time.

Particular effort should be made to immunize people at higher risk for influenza infection or complications. This includes all children aged 6 months-18 years, all persons aged ≥ 50 years, and:

- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities;
- People who have long-term heart or lung problems, including asthma; and,
- People who have other serious medical conditions, such as kidney disease, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, anemia, cancer, weak immune systems (including those with HIV), or a seizure disorder.

To help prevent the spread of influenza to people in high risk groups, those who live with people in a high risk group and healthcare workers who provide care to high risk patients should also receive an annual influenza shot. Travelers to countries outside of the U.S. may also need to consider influenza vaccination.

What are other steps that can be taken to prevent the spread of influenza?

Good health habits can help prevent influenza. These include covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing; washing your hands often to help protect yourself from germs; avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth; staying home from work, school, and errands when you are sick; and avoiding close contact with people who are sick. Antiviral medications may also be used to prevent or treat influenza, but are not a substitute for vaccination. For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (www.cdc.gov/flu/) or talk to a healthcare professional.

Gripe ó Influenza

¿Qué es la gripe ó influenza?

Es una enfermedad viral de la zona respiratoria. Hay dos tipos principales de virus de la gripe, A y B. Cada tipo incluye muchas diversas formas que tienden a cambiar cada año.

¿Cuándo ocurre la gripe?

La gripe ocurre con más frecuencia en los últimos meses del otoño y del invierno.

¿Quién contrae la gripe?

Cualquier persona puede contraer gripe, pero es más seria en ancianos, en gente con enfermedades crónicas (tales como enfisema y otras enfermedades del pulmón, del corazón, cáncer ó diabetes) ó con sistema inmune débil.

¿Cómo se transmite?

La gripe es altamente contagiosa y se transmite fácilmente a través de contacto con las secreciones de la nariz y garganta de una persona infectada cuando tose y/o estornuda.

¿Cuáles son los síntomas de la gripe?

Los síntomas típicos de la gripe incluyen dolor de cabeza, fiebre, calorfrío, tos, garganta dolorida y dolores de cuerpo. La diarrea y el vómito no son comunes. Aunque la mayoría de las personas enferman por una semana ó menos, algunas pueden tener enfermedad más seria y necesitar ser hospitalizados.

¿Qué tan pronto después del contagio aparecen los síntomas?

Los síntomas aparecen generalmente en 1 a 3 días.

¿Cómo se diagnostica y se trata la gripe?

Generalmente el doctor diagnostica la gripe basandose en los síntomas típicos. Están disponibles pruebas de laboratorio, pero comúnmente no se utilizan. Descanso y consumo de líquidos es el tratamiento recomendado. Medicamentos recetados (amantadine, rimantadine) pueden prevenir ó reducir la severidad de la gripe tipo A. No se debe dar aspirina a los niños debido a la posibilidad de causar la complicación llamada síndrome de Reye.

¿Cuanto tiempo puede una persona transmitir la gripe?

El período contagioso varía, pero comienza probablemente el día antes de que los síntomas aparecen y se extiende por una semana.

¿Hace inmune a una persona las infecciones previas con gripe?

Generalmente, no. Los virus que causan gripe cambian con frecuencia, por lo tanto las personas que han tenido gripe en años anteriores puede infectarse con una nueva forma de gripe. La gente en grupos de alto riesgo, necesitan ser vacunados contra la gripe cada año.

¿Cuáles son los grupos del alto riesgo? ¿Qué deben hacer?

Los grupos siguientes están en alto riesgo de contraer enfermedad seria con la gripe y deben recibir la vacuna cada año: todas las personas de 65 ó mas años de edad; adultos y niños con problemas crónicos del corazón ó el pulmón; residentes de asilos de reposo y otras instituciones que tienen a pacientes de cualquier edad con problemas crónicos y serios de salud; gente que tiene enfermedad del riñón, fibrosis quística, diabetes, anemia, asma severa, cáncer ó sistema inmune débil y otras condiciones médicas por las cuales estén bajo supervisión cercana de un doctor. Para ayudar a prevenir la diseminación de la gripe a grupos del alto riesgo, la gente que vive con personas en un grupo del alto riesgo y trabajadores del servicio médico que proporcionan cuidado a pacientes de alto riesgo debe también recibir la vacuna anual de la gripe.