

## Is it a Cold or the Flu?

The cold and flu season is beginning. While good attendance is important to the learning process, illness compromises a sick child's learning and jeopardizes other students. A child who is experiencing symptoms of illness should not be sent to school.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, high (102-104°F), lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General aches, pains	Slight	Usual, often severe
Fatigue, weakness	Quite mild	Can last up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Early and prominent
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common, can become severe
<b>Complications</b>	Sinus congestion or earache	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening
<b>Prevention</b>	None	Annual vaccination, antiviral medicines. See your doctor.
<b>Treatment</b>	Only temporary relief of symptoms	Antiviral medicines. See your doctor.

*Information from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases*

In deciding when to send a child back to school after having the flu, the Health Department recommends that your child be **out of school for at least 3 to 5 days after fever and respiratory symptoms begin and a full 24 hours after fever subsides.**

**When a child returns to school, he/she should be physically able to participate in all school activities.** Concentration and learning are difficult for a sick child. Illness also creates disruption in the classroom, affects the concentration and learning of the child's classmates, and exposes them to illness. Remaining at home, as recommended above, will help minimize the spread of infections and viruses in the classroom.