

Flu Information: A Guide for Parents



What is the flu?

Influenza (also known as flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. Flu is different from a cold, and usually comes on suddenly. Each year flu viruses cause millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospital stays and thousands or tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.

What parents should know.

• What are flu symptoms?

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with the flu **will not** have a fever.

• What are some other ways I can protect my child against flu?

In addition to getting a flu vaccine, you and your child should take everyday actions to help prevent the spread of germs. Stay away from people who are sick as much as possible. If you or your child are sick avoid contact with others as much as possible to prevent spreading the infection. Always remember to cover your coughs and sneezes, wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, and clean surfaces that may be contaminated with flu viruses.

If your child is sick.

• What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids.

If your child is 5 years or older and does not have long-term health problems and get flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

• When can my child go back to school after having flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care, or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C)* or higher.

*Many authorities use either 100 (37.8 degrees Celsius) or 100.4 (38.0 degrees Celsius) as a cut-off for fever, but this number can vary depending on factors such as the method of measurement and the age of the person.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/children or a **Singing River Medical Clinic** near you.

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