



# The Flu: A Guide for Parents

Dear Parents & Guardians,

As the 2018-2019 cold and Influenza (flu) season begins, I would like to review some measures that may help your family stay healthier this season and year round.

Flu viruses are most common during the fall and winter. The exact timing and duration of flu seasons can vary, but most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February.

Your child's health and safety at school are our top priority, so please review with your child how he/she can help in the fight against Influenza in our community.

Feel free to contact your school site for any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Christina Mashore, RN, BSN, CMSRN, PHN  
District School Nurse

## Get vaccinated today!

- ✓ Protect yourself and your family.
- ✓ The vaccine is widely available in our area.
- ✓ Check with your physician's office, the local health department, and/or local pharmacies.



## What is the flu?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a routine cold or stomach virus, and usually comes on suddenly.

Is it a cold or flu?	Influenza	Cold
<b>Signs and Symptoms</b>		
Symptom onset	Abrupt	Gradual
Fever	Usual	Rare
Aches	Usual	Slight
Chills	Fairly common	Uncommon
Fatigue, weakness	Usual	Sometimes
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest discomfort, cough	Common	Mild to moderate
Headache	Common	Rare

Please note that you may be able to pass on the flu virus to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Most healthy individuals may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

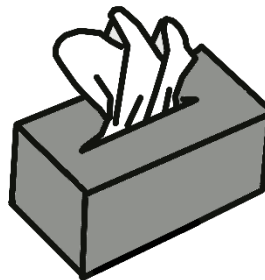
## More Important Facts

### How flu spreads

Flu viruses spread mainly by tiny droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get the flu by touching a surface or object that has the flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

### Prevention is KEY

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the first and most important step in preventing the flu is to get a flu vaccine each year. The flu vaccine has been shown to reduce flu related illnesses and the risk of serious flu complications that can result in hospitalization or even death. Everyday preventive actions are also important to help fight the spread of germs, like the flu:



- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

### Flu treatment

If you think your child has the flu, please keep them home from school to prevent spreading flu to others. It may be recommended to visit a doctor, especially for individuals with certain medical conditions which place them at high risk for serious flu-related complications. Antiviral medication may be prescribed to get better faster, although this is not always the case.



### How can you help?

- ✓ Sit down and talk to your child about the flu. Teach them how they can use everyday preventive actions to stay healthy this season.
- ✓ Get yourself and your family vaccinated. Watch this 50-second video: <https://youtu.be/K0HriqF9-E0>
- ✓ Keep your child home when sick. They may return to school 24 hours after their fever is gone.
- ✓ Send in a donation of disinfectant wipes, tissues, and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer to your child's school or teachers if able.

