



Mobile County PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent Chresal D. Threadgill

A Note from the School Nurse:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you probably know already, flu season is upon us. To prevent widespread flu cases in our school, please use the following guidelines to determine whether or not to send your child to school:

DEFINITELY KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF HE/SHE HAS ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS:

- Fever of 100 degrees or greater (student may return to school ONLY AFTER his/her temperature has been below 100 degrees for 24 hours WITHOUT THE USE OF FEVER REDUCING MEDICATIONS)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chills
- General malaise or feelings of fatigue, weakness, or body aches

Consult your child's physician for possible evaluation if any of the above symptoms last more than 24 hours.

PLEASE ASSIST US BY REINFORCING THESE GOOD HYGIENE HABITS AT HOME:

- Frequent handwashing
- Keep hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible
- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing. Wash hands or use sanitizer after.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you or your child are sick.

Please feel free to contact the School Nurse or Health Services if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank You for your assistance in this matter.

Health Services Department



Flu:

A Guide for Parents



Influenza (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 causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.

Flu can be very dangerous for children. CDC estimates that since 2010, between 6,000 and 26,000 children younger than 5 years old have been hospitalized from flu each year in the U.S. Flu vaccine is safe and helps protect children from flu.

What parents should know

How serious is flu?

While flu illness can vary from mild to severe, children often need medical care because of flu. Children younger than 5 years old and children of any age with certain long-term health problems are at increased risk of flu complications like pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections. Some health problems that are known to make children more vulnerable to flu include asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system.

How does flu spread?

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly by droplets made when someone with flu coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. A person also can get flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

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.

Protect your child

How can I protect my child from flu?

The first and best way to protect against flu is to get a yearly flu vaccine for yourself and your child.

- Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older every year. Flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines are both options for vaccination.
- It's especially important that young children and children with certain long-term health problems get vaccinated.
- Caregivers of children at higher risk of flu complications should get a flu vaccine. (Babies younger than 6 months are at higher risk for serious flu complications, but too young to get a flu vaccine.)
- Pregnant people should get a flu vaccine to protect themselves and their baby from flu. Research shows that flu vaccination during pregnancy protects the baby from flu for several months after birth.
- Flu viruses are constantly changing and so flu vaccines are updated often to protect against the flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season.

Are flu vaccines safe?

Flu vaccines have an excellent safety record. Millions of people have safely received flu vaccines for decades. Flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines are both options for vaccination. Different types of flu vaccines are licensed for different ages. Each person should get one that is appropriate for their age. CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend an annual flu vaccine for all children 6 months and older.

What are the benefits of getting a flu vaccine?

- **A flu vaccine can keep you and your child from getting sick.** When vaccine viruses and circulating viruses are matched, flu vaccination has been shown to reduce risk of getting sick with flu by about 40 to 60%.
- **Flu vaccines can keep your child from being hospitalized from flu.** One recent study showed that flu vaccine reduced children's risk of flu-related pediatric intensive care unit admission by 74%.
- **Flu vaccine can be life saving in children.**

A study using data from recent flu seasons found that flu vaccine reduced the risk of flu-associated death by half among children with higher risk medical conditions



and by nearly two-thirds among children without medical conditions.

- **Flu vaccination also may make your illness milder if you do get sick.**
- **Getting yourself and your child vaccinated also can protect others** who may be more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain long-term health problems.

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 to keep from getting sick yourself. If you or your child are sick, avoid others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. Also, remember to regularly cover your coughs and sneezes, wash your hands often, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and clean surfaces that may be contaminated with flu viruses. These everyday actions can help reduce your chances of getting sick and prevent the spread of germs to others if you are sick. However, a yearly flu vaccine is the best way to prevent flu illness.

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 a long-term health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

Children younger than 5 years old – especially those younger than 2 years – and children with certain long-term health problems (including asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system), are at higher risk of serious flu complications. Call your doctor or take your child to the doctor right away if they develop flu symptoms.

What if my child seems very sick?

Even healthy children can get very sick from flu. If your child is experiencing the following emergency warning signs, you should go to the emergency room:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish lips or face
- Ribs pulling in with each breath
- Chest pain

- Severe muscle pain (child refuses to walk)
- Dehydration (no urine for 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears when crying)
- Not alert or interacting when awake
- Seizures
- Fever above 104°F
- In children less than 12 weeks, any fever
- Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions



This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.

Is there a medicine to treat flu?

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat flu illness. They can shorten your illness and make it milder, and they can prevent serious complications that could result in a hospital stay. Antivirals work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. Antiviral drugs are recommended to treat flu in people who are very sick (for example, people who are in the hospital) or people who are at higher risk of serious flu complications who get flu symptoms. Antivirals can be given to children and pregnant people.

How long can a sick person spread flu to others?

People with flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to up to 5 to 7 days after. Severely ill people or young children may be able to spread the flu longer, especially if they still have symptoms.

Can my child go to school, day care, or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid spreading flu to other children or caregivers.

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 F (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/protect/children.htm or call 800-CDC-INFO



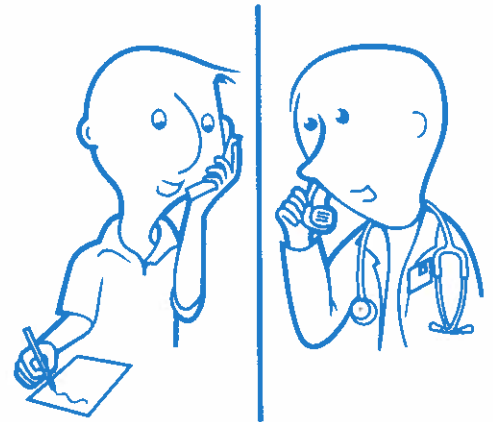
U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

What to Do If Your Child Gets Sick with the Flu

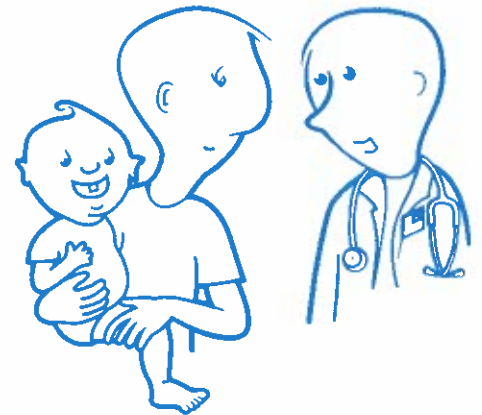
Children younger than 5 years old have a greater chance of having problems with the flu. Children with a long-term condition such as asthma and diabetes are also more likely to have severe problems if they get the flu.

If your child is younger than 5 years of age or of any age with a long-term health condition (like asthma or diabetes), and develops flu-like symptoms, they are at risk for serious complications from the flu.

Ask a doctor if your child should be examined.

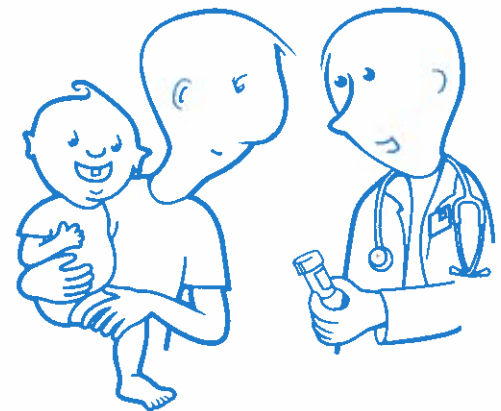


Most children will get better without needing to go to the doctor. Other children may have more severe illness from the flu. A child of any age with severe signs of the flu should go to the doctor.



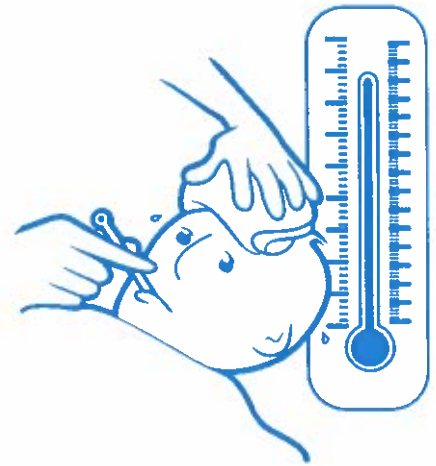
Antiviral drugs used to treat the flu work best when started within the first 2 days (48 hours) of getting sick.

The doctor may start your child on antiviral drugs even after 48 hours from when flu signs started, especially if your child is in the hospital or has a higher chance of severe illness from the flu.

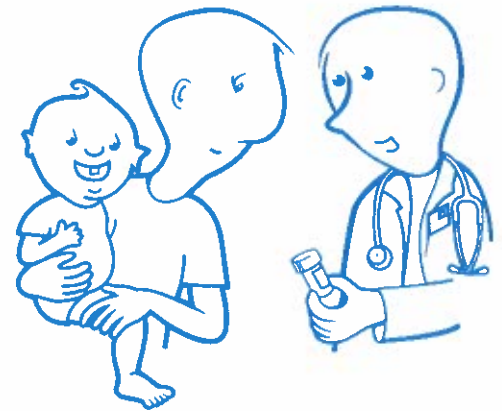


INFLUENZA (FLU) If Your Child Gets the Flu

A fever is a temperature greater than or equal to 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius). If you do not have a thermometer, feel your child's face. If your child feels warmer than normal, has a flushed appearance, is sweating, or is shivering, your child may have a fever.



If your child has a fever there are medicines that can be used to reduce the fever. Some are sold at stores (over-the-counter) and you can buy them freely. Others require a prescription from a doctor. Make sure you talk to your doctor and see what medicine your doctor recommends based on your child's age.

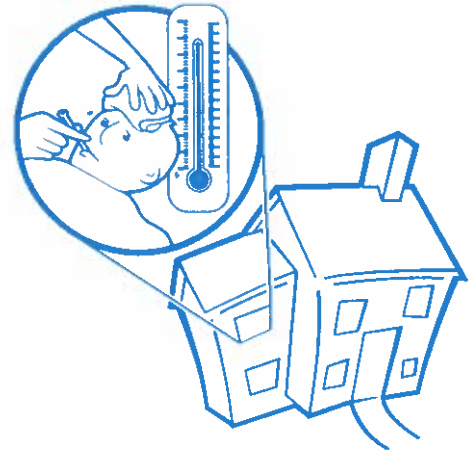


Some medicines sold in stores (over-the-counter) are approved for children to make them feel better. You should call your doctor to make sure these medicines are okay for your child. Note that you should never give aspirin to children who might have the flu.

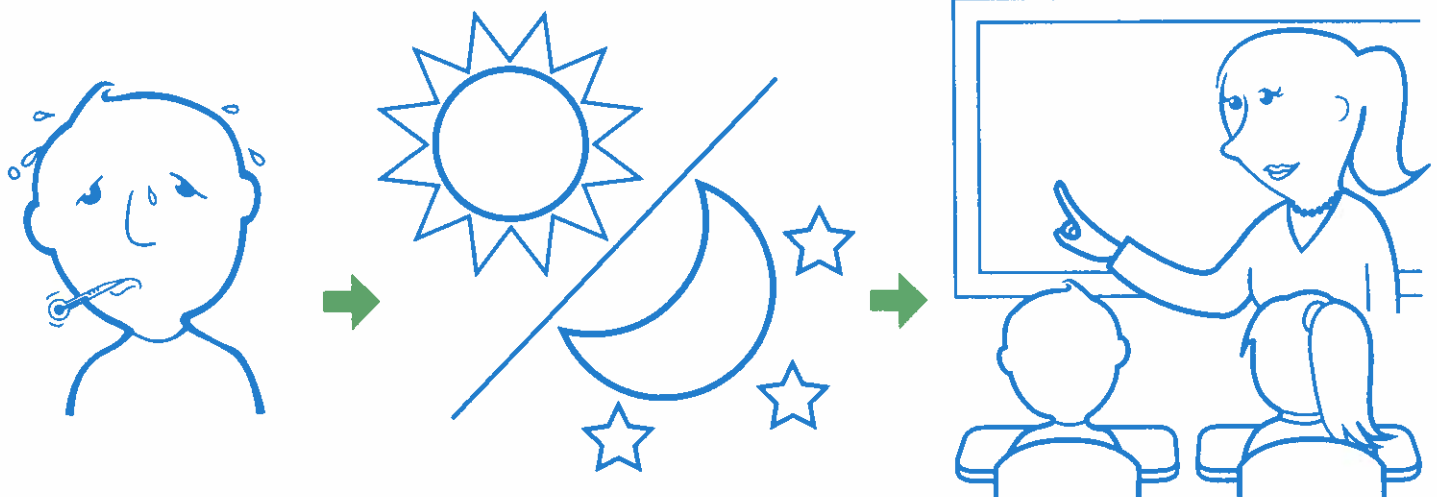


INFLUENZA (FLU) If Your Child Gets the Flu

To reduce the spread of the flu, keep your sick child at home until at least 24 hours after the fever is gone, except to get medical care.



Children can go back to school 24 hours after their fever is gone **WITHOUT** the use of medicine that lowers fever.



While your child is sick, make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants, Pedialyte®) to make sure his or her body has the fluids it needs.

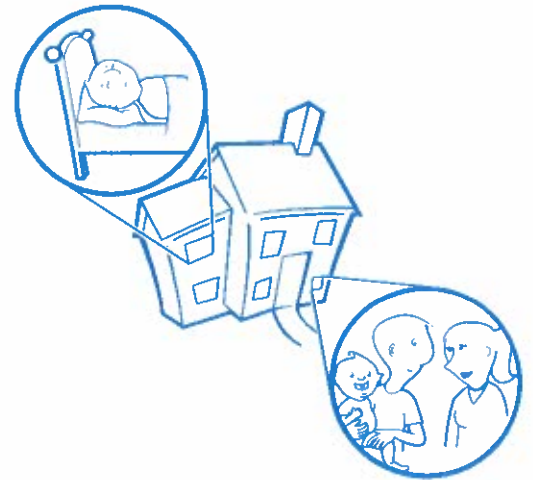


INFLUENZA (FLU)

If Your Child Gets the Flu

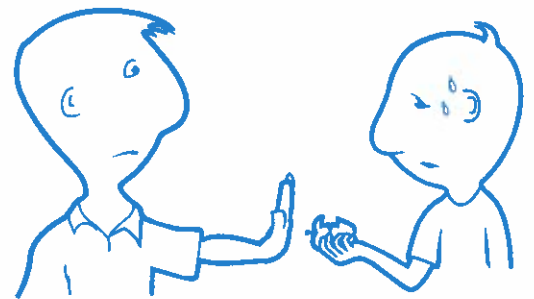
Things to do to reduce the spread of flu to others in the house:

Keep your sick child in a separate room in the house as much as possible to limit contact with healthy household members.



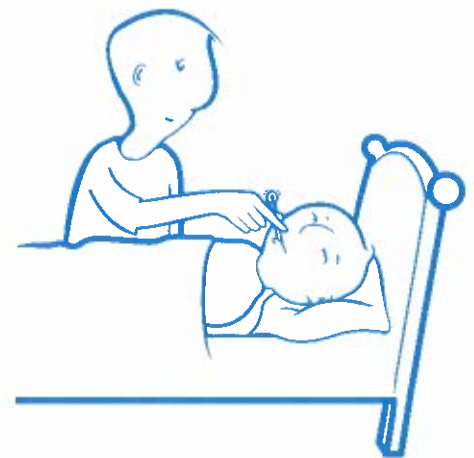
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Do not allow your child to share food or drinks with others.



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Try to have one person as the main caregiver for the sick child. If possible the caregiver should be someone who is not at higher risk for severe flu, such as pregnant people or people with health conditions like asthma.



For more information call CDC info at 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or go to www.cdc.gov/flu.