

TIPS FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE HELP KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY AND FLU FREE

With flu season upon us, it is important to keep our children healthy. Children are two to three times more likely than adults to get sick with the flu, and on average, one in three children in the U.S. is affected by the virus each year.

Usually flu is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Occasionally, people get the flu from touching a germ-infested surface.

It is important to know the difference between cold and flu. Common symptoms of the flu include high fever, severe headache, muscle and body aches, chills, sore throat, exhaustion and dry cough. Children may also have nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Often cold symptoms come on gradually and they include stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat and hacking cough.

SIMPLE STEPS FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD HEALTHY:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the best way to prevent your child from getting the flu is to take him/her to get a flu vaccine.
- Talk to your child about practicing good health habits, such as:
Washing hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
Covering mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing-preferably into the inside of the elbow or with a tissue and disposing of the tissue immediately into the trash
Avoiding sharing drinks, water bottles, eating utensils and cell phones
Avoiding touching their eyes, nose and mouth
- You can help prevent the flu from spreading at home by disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, toys and other commonly shared items.
- You can prevent spreading illness to others by keeping your sick children home from school until they have been fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication). It is important for your sick child to get rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Some children may benefit from an antiviral medication, which can be prescribed by a doctor to help lessen the number of days that a child is sick with the virus. To be effective, antiviral medication should be taken within 12-48 hours after the flu symptoms begin. A doctor may also prescribe the antiviral to prevent the child from getting the flu; if taken within the first 12-48 hours of exposure to the flu virus there is an 89 percent chance the medication will keep him/her from getting sick.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about preventing and treating the flu please the _____, School Nurse at _____. For additional information on the influenza virus you can visit www.cdc.gov/flu

