

FLU OR COLD

What is the influenza (the flu)?

The flu is an illness caused by the influenza virus, which affects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). The flu is spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks and the virus is released into the air. The common cold is spread the same way, however, with the flu there may be serious complications in some people.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

The flu is a respiratory illness. The symptoms include: fever, headache, extreme fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. **In children**, sometimes there are gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

What are the things you can do to protect yourselves and your family?

- Wash your and your children's hands frequently, especially before eating. Germs are spread easily from hand to hand and hand to mouth contact.
- Dispose of soiled tissues properly. Do not leave them lying around.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Eat well-balanced meals. Pay particular attention to good fluid intake.
- Many doctors recommend that their patients get a flu vaccine. Check with your physician and ask for her recommendation for your family.

If you think your child is symptomatic, it is best to keep them at home rather than send them to school where they can be infected with some other virus, and/or spread the virus they have. Extra rest is always helpful to help the body recover. Please keep your children home until they are **fever-free for 24 hours WITHOUT fever reducing medicine in their system**, and **have not thrown up in 24 hours** and are eating and drinking normally. If you are not sure whether your child ready to go back to school, please contact your physician for advice.

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Is it a Cold or is it the Flu? How to tell the difference.

Cold	Flu
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Begins with irritation in the nose and/or a scratchy feeling in the throat❖ Nasal stuffiness❖ Sneezing❖ Runny nose❖ Throat irritation is often involved (but not with a red throat)❖ Adults and older children generally have minimal or no fever❖ Within one to three days, nasal secretions thicken and perhaps yellow or green—this is part of the common cold and not a reason for antibiotics.❖ The entire cold is over in about 7 days with perhaps lingering symptoms such as a cough for another week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ You feel sick all over.❖ The flu begins abruptly with a fever in the 102 degree range lasting for a day or two but can last 5 days.❖ Flushed face❖ Body aches❖ Marked lack of energy❖ Between day 2 and 4 of the illness, the “whole body” symptoms subside and respiratory symptoms begin to increase; usually a dry hacking cough, red throat, and headache. These symptoms except the cough usually disappear within 4 to 7 days. There may be a second wave of fever at this time.❖ The cough and tiredness usually last for weeks after the rest of the illness is over.❖ The flu is airborne and highly contagious.