

THE FLU: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW TO KEEP KIDS HEALTHY

WHAT IS THE FLU?

- The flu is caused by the influenza virus, which infects the lungs, nose and throat
- Flu can cause mild to severe illness, and sometimes, can lead to death
- Each year in the United States:
 - 5-20 percent of Americans fall ill to the flu
 - Children are two to three times more likely than adults to get sick with the flu, and they frequently spread the virus to others
- Young children are at the greatest risk for developing serious flu complications, as well as the elderly and those with certain health conditions

HOW DOES FLU SPREAD?

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

WHAT ARE THE COMMON SYMPTOMS OF FLU?

Often we get confused about the symptoms of the flu and how they are different from a common cold. Knowing the symptoms of the flu is important and will help you act quickly to get your child feeling better faster

- Common symptoms of flu include: high fever, severe headache, muscle and body aches, exhaustion and dry cough
 - Children often have additional flu symptoms that are rare in adults, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Symptoms of a common cold 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
- You should 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 with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, and disposing of the tissue in a proper trash receptacle
 - Avoiding sharing drinks, water bottles or silverware with others
- You can help prevent the flu from spreading at home by disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, toys and other commonly shared items
- Also, if someone in your household gets the flu, a doctor can prescribe a medication – called an antiviral – that can actually prevent other members of the household from catching the flu
 - Studies show that some antiviral medications are up to 89 percent effective in preventing the flu when taken once daily for seven days

DON'T TAKE THE FLU LYING DOWN

- If you are concerned about your child's flu symptoms, call your doctor early. Call your doctor immediately if your child has a chronic disease. Some children may benefit from an antiviral medication, which can be prescribed by a physician and can help lessen the duration of the virus and reduce the risk of complications, such as pneumonia
 - To be effective, antiviral medication should be taken within 12-48 hours after flu symptoms begin
- If your child has the flu, it is important for them to stay home from school, rest, and drink plenty of fluids
- Additionally, if your child has the flu, please notify the school nurse, Ann Hartin at (770) 360-1336. Monitoring flu incidence at Mill Springs Academy will help keep students, faculty and our community healthy.



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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE INFLUENZA VIRUS, VISIT WWW.CDC.GOV/FLU