

## **January School Health Newsletter 2019**    Compiled by Beth Green RN BSN

### **Flu or Cold Symptoms?**

How do you know your child has a cold or the flu and should you send them to school?

#### **Symptoms of the flu include:**

Fever (usually high), extreme tiredness, headache, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches and pains, stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea (more common in children than adults), chest discomfort

#### **Symptoms of a cold:**

Sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, may have fever (usually not high), productive cough, mucus, sore throat

\*Please do not send your child to school if they have over a 100 degree fever or has had it in the past 24 hours, is vomiting or has vomited in the past 24 hours, or has a severe sore throat. More information can be found on the school's Jr/Sr High page under the Nurse's Station tab. If you have questions, call 330-326-2711, ext. 541. Wash those hands and stay healthy!!

Link to CDC website for flu information: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/qa.htm>

## Cold vs. flu: How to tell the difference

It's that time of year for runny noses, scratchy throats and constant sneezing. The all-too familiar cold symptoms — you can't miss them.


It's also that time of year when flu season peaks. Though influenza activity often begins to increase in October, it peaks between December and February, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Though different viruses cause them, the flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses and share similar symptoms, so it can be difficult to tell them apart. Many parents are left wondering, does my child have the flu or a cold?

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold and symptoms are more intense. In fact, the flu can cause serious complications, such as pneumonia. A big difference between the viruses is that a cold will most likely not give your child a high fever and body aches.

The rate at which symptoms appear is another strong differentiating factor. Colds normally develop slowly over a few days, whereas the flu symptoms can come on suddenly. Also, severe symptoms from the flu normally subside in about 3 days, whereas cold symptoms can last 7 to 10 days.

The chart below lists typical symptoms for the flu and common cold. Taking stock of symptoms and how long they last will help you determine what's causing your child trouble.

| Is it a cold or flu?  |               |                  |
|---|---------------|------------------|
|  |               |                  |
| Signs and Symptoms  | Influenza     | Cold             |
| 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             |

# School Health

## Stop the Spread of Cold and Flu Viruses

You probably already know how awful the flu or common cold can make you feel. To help avoid all that misery - and possible health complications - getting a flu shot is the best way to prevent an illness.

But aside from vaccination, take these 5 steps to reduce your chances of getting sick during the cold and flu season:

**1. Wash your hands frequently - and properly.**

Using soap and warm water, scrub every surface of your hands, including under your fingernails, for a full 20 to 30 seconds. When you're not near a sink, hand sanitizer is a good substitute.

**2. Cover your cough or sneeze.**

Cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue so the cold germs won't get on your hands and spread.

**3. In this case, don't share!**

Sharing paper towels, utensils, drinks or food in the lunchroom or bathroom can spread cold and flu germs.

**4. Disinfect at home and school.**

Cold germs can live on surfaces for several hours or even days. Wiping down things like your cellphone, locker, school desk, doorknobs and remotes can prevent the spread of germs.

**5. Avoid touching your face.**

Try to keep your fingers out of your eyes, nose and mouth. Cold and flu germs on your hands can easily be transferred when rubbing or itching your eyes and nose, for instance.





