

F a c t s

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS SICK WITH INFLUENZA

Older children and teenagers have the same symptoms of influenza as adults. Very young children and infants probably have similar symptoms, but do not know how to tell people they have sore muscles or a headache. These children may be irritable and eat poorly. They sometimes develop a hoarse cry and barking cough (croup). Younger children may also have diarrhea, vomiting and stomach pain-especially children under six months.

Some of the things you can do for your child are:

- Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever in the dose recommended on the package (unless your doctor says otherwise). **DO NOT GIVE ASPIRIN.**
- Do not expect to be prescribed antibiotics for uncomplicated influenza, as they will have no benefit. Antibiotics may be prescribed for complications of influenza such as pneumonia or ear infection.
- Dress the child in lightweight clothing and keep the room temperature at 20C.
- Offer cool fluids frequently when the child is awake.
- Avoid cool baths.
- Allow the child to rest and stay at home if possible for 6 days or more, to ensure the virus isn't spread to others
- Use salt-water nose drops to treat a stuffy nose.
- Throw away tissues as soon as you have wiped your child's nose. Teach the child to cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze and then immediately throw the tissue away. Wash your hands often and teach your child to do so after wiping the nose.

Take your child to the doctor if your child:

- Has heart or lung disease or any chronic illness requiring medical care; has a disease or is taking drugs or treatments that affect the immune system; takes acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) e.g. aspirin regularly for a medical condition;
- Has trouble breathing;
- Is less than 6 months old and has any temperature over 38.5 C;
- Is constantly irritable and will not calm down;
- Is listless and not interested in playing with toys;
- Has a fever that lasts more than 5 days;
- Drinks so little fluid that they are not urinating at least every 6 hours when awake;
- Has vomiting for more than 4 hours, or has severe diarrhea;
- Note: green or yellow nasal discharge does not mean a child has a bacterial infection and needs antibiotics.

— *Health & Environment Facts* —

Take your child to the hospital emergency department or call 911 if your child:

- Has severe trouble breathing not caused by a stuffy nose
- Has blue lips
- Is limp or unable to move
- Is hard to wake up, unusually quiet or unresponsive
- Has a stiff neck
- Seems confused
- Has a seizure (convulsion/fit)
- Has not had a wet diaper in 12 hours.

Source: Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan Feb. 2004, Annex G, page 255