

ADVICE FOR CAREGIVERS

- Remember the flu spreads through respiratory droplets acquired through sneezing and coughing occasionally through indirect contact with respiratory droplets.
- If your child has classic flu symptoms, the following precautions should be followed:
 - Call your healthcare provider immediately when symptoms present. The doctor may want to start an anti-viral medication.
 - If your child goes to daycare or you work at a daycare or school, do not go to daycare.
 - Try to minimize contact with other children as much as possible.
 - Follow all general health habits listed previously.

If your child develops a high fever, respiratory symptoms, or general malaise or unresponsiveness, contact your doctor immediately.

REFERENCES

- CDC-Influenza (Flu)/Preventing the flu. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Available at:
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- Natural way to prevent colds and flu. WebMD Health website. Available at:
http://mywebmd.com/content/pages/5/4068_103.htm. Accessed October 14, 2005.

KIDSMEDS PHARMACY

1936 OLD ORCHARD ROAD

BIRMINGHAM, AL 35216

(205) 824-0775

WWW.KIDSMEDSPHARMACY.COM

FLU: TIPS FOR PREVENTION



THE FLU (INFLUENZA)

Influenza, the "flu", is a contagious respiratory illness which can be spread through respiratory droplets caused by coughing and sneezing. A person that has contracted the flu can spread the disease beginning on day 1 when the symptoms are not present through day 5 after becoming symptomatic. Therefore, it is important to remember that one can spread the illness even before he/she knows the illness is present. The following are symptoms of the flu: high fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches and stomach symptoms such as nausea vomiting and diarrhea.

The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated every year between the months of October and November; however, vaccination is still an option in December and January. In addition to yearly vaccination, general health habits and anti-viral medication can also be used to prevent the flu.



GOOD HEALTH HABITS

- Avoid close contact with people that are sick and when you are sick.
- Stay at home when you are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you are coughing and sneezing. Do not use your hands because germs can cling to your hands; if there is not a tissue available, turn your head and cough or sneeze into the air.
- Clean your hands with soap or antibacterial liquid regularly because germs can live for hours.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. The flu can enter the body through the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Get fresh air in the winter months. Central heating dries a person out and therefore will make him/her more susceptible to germs and viruses. Also as people stay inside during the winter months, more germs are circulating in crowded rooms.

- Eat foods containing phytochemicals such as dark green, red, and yellow fruits and veggies.

TWO TYPES OF FLU VACCINES

- Inactivated vaccine (a killed virus) is given by an intramuscular injection. It is approved for all children older than 6 months of age, including healthy individuals and individuals with chronic medical conditions.
- Nasal spray vaccine (a live virus) is approved for children over 2 years old to adults 49 years old that are not pregnant.

Advice for Caregivers of all children under the age of 6 months: The influenza vaccination is not approved for children under the age of 6 months.

Advice for caregivers of all children 6 months to 23 months: Children between the age of 6 months to 23 months are more likely to be hospitalized with the flu and its complications than children over the age of 2 years, even if they are healthy. Complications of the flu include the following: pneumonia, dehydration, worsening of medical conditions such as heart disease or asthma, encephalopathy (disease of the brain), sinus problems, and ear infections. Therefore, all children between the ages of 6 months to 23 months must be vaccinated. Also, household contacts and caregivers of children less than 2 years old should be vaccinated against the flu.