



The Flu and Colds: Tips on Helping Your Child Feel Better

The Difference Between the Flu and A Cold

The flu and a cold have many similar symptoms. Colds are generally milder, usually starting with feeling tired, coughing, sneezing and having a runny nose. A fever may or may not be present. Headaches, muscle aches, watery eyes and a sore or scratchy throat may also occur.

The flu tends to start suddenly. The same symptoms above for a cold may be present but will be more severe. People who have had the flu often describe feeling as if they have been run over by a truck!

There are no cures for colds and the flu, though if the flu is suspected, a doctor can prescribe medicine to help limit the severity of the flu IF the symptoms are reported in the very early stages. Antibiotics will not cure the flu or a cold because they are caused by viruses, which antibiotics cannot fight.

What Can Help

- Stay home and rest, especially if a fever is present
- Avoid second hand smoke, which can worsen symptoms
- Drink plenty of fluids like water, fruit juices, and clear soups
- Gargle with warm salt water a few times a day to help with sore throat
- Throat spray or lozenges also may help relieve throat pain
- Use saline (salt water) nose drops or sprays (available over-the-counter) for nasal congestion

Treating the symptoms of the flu and colds are usually the most helpful. Many remedies are available over-the-counter. A pharmacist can help by suggesting the appropriate medication for the symptoms. The large variety of medications available can be overwhelming! Generic medications are usually less expensive and compare to the more expensive name brands. If any medications are to be given in school by the nurse, please send them in the original container with a note stating when they should be given.

When To Call The Doctor For Your Child

- High (above 102) or prolonged fever
- Symptoms which last more than 10 days
- Difficulty breathing; bluish skin color
- Not being able to drink enough fluids
- Earache or ear drainage
- Changes in mental status
- Symptoms that improve but return with fever, worse cough, colored secretions