



## Tips for keeping kids healthy

### Cold vs. Flu

#### *What is the difference between a cold and the flu?*

According to the Center for Disease Control, "the flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. Because these two types of illnesses have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms are more common and intense. Colds are usually milder than the flu."

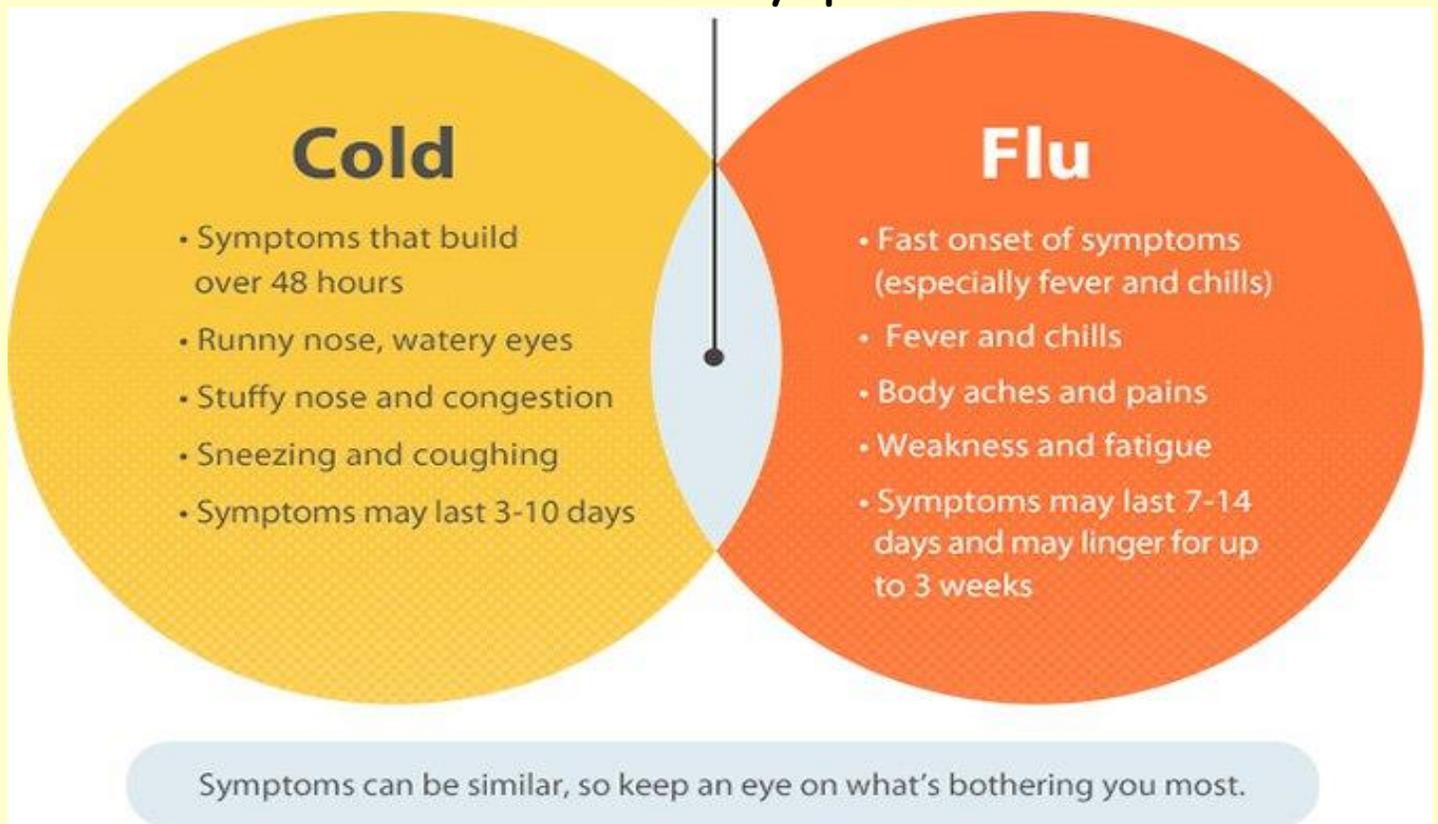
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/coldflu.htm>

### Handwashing

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a five-step procedure for the most effective handwashing technique.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water before applying soap
2. Lather the backs and palms of your hands, under your nails and between your fingers
3. Scrub for 20 seconds, about the length of time it takes to hum the Birthday Song twice
4. Thoroughly rinse hands under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands with a clean towel

### Watch for symptoms



With flu season upon us, it is important to keep our children healthy. Children are more likely than adults to get sick with the flu.

### Is the Flu serious?

- Yes, the Flu can be very serious

### How does Flu spread?

- Usually, the flu is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. The flu virus is in the wet droplets of saliva and mucus that comes out of the nose and mouth when a person coughs or sneezes. Occasionally, people get the flu from touching a germ-infested surface. Usually Flu symptoms start 1-4 days after a person is exposed to the virus.

### Who should get the flu vaccine?

- 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. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every season with rare exception. Vaccination is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. Flu vaccination has important benefits. It can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. Flu vaccine also has been shown to be life-saving in children. In fact, a 2017 study showed that flu vaccination can significantly reduce a child's risk of dying from flu.

### How can I prevent getting the flu?

- Talk to you 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 when sneezing or coughing-preferably into the inside of the elbow or with a tissue and disposing of the tissue immediately into the trash
  - Avoiding sharing drinks, water bottles, eating utensils and cell phones
  - Avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth
  - Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, toys, and other commonly shared items such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, and faucet handles.
  - Keep your immune system strong and healthy. As flu season approaches, students, parents, and school staff should take extra care to make sure they're getting enough sleep and exercise, avoiding stress, and eating a well-balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables

### What to do if I do have the flu?

- **STAY HOME FROM WORK AND SCHOOL**, avoid contact with others so the virus does not spread
- Stay home until you have been free from fever for at least 24 hours after your last dose of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Motrin
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Get plenty of rest
- Wash hands often

**If you have any questions, please contact your child's school nurse**