

“Sick-Day Guidelines –Making the Right Call”

(from National Association of School Nurses’ website)

When should I keep my child home due to illness?

- Fever of 100.0 degrees or higher
- Has been vomiting or has diarrhea
- Has symptoms that prevent him/her from participating in school, such as:
 - Excessive tiredness or lack of appetite
 - Productive or persistent cough
 - Headache, body aches, or earache
 - Sore throat*
 - **A minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but severe throat pain could be strep throat even if there is no fever. Other symptoms of strep throat in children are headache and stomach upset. Contact your pediatrician as your child may need a throat culture to determine if it is strep throat. Ask the doctor to provide a note when your child may return to school.*

Keep your child home until fever, vomiting or diarrhea has been gone for 24 hours without medication.

How to tell the difference between influenza (the “flu”) and a cold?

Learn the differences between the flu and the common cold. The following chart highlights information from the CDC, and can help you compare symptoms of the common cold and seasonal influenza.

	<u>Influenza</u>	<u>Common Cold</u>
Onset	Sudden	Gradual
Fever	High	None to low grade
Fatigue	Severe	Mild
Cough	Severe	Mild to Moderate
Throat	Sore	May be sore
Headache	Achy	No aches
Appetite	Decreased	May be decreased
Muscles	Achy	No aches
Chills	Yes	None
Stuffy, runny nose	Sometimes	Common
Complications	Bronchitis/pneumonia	Earache/sinus infection
Prevention	Annual vaccine	Good Hygiene
Treatment	Antiviral drugs, in 24-48 hrs.	Symptomatic relief

People sometimes call gastroenteritis the “flu” or “stomach flu”. It is not the same as seasonal influenza which is a respiratory infection. However children, more commonly than adults, may complain of stomach aches with seasonal influenza. More information about the flu may be obtained at www.cdc.gov/flu and more information on gastroenteritis can be found at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001298/>.

The flu can be serious, especially if you have chronic health conditions or have a weakened immune system due to disease or medication. Call your health care provider at the first sign of flu symptoms, which typically come on suddenly, to see what treatment is needed. If you’re unsure about the best way to treat your child’s cold or flu, ask your school nurse, doctor or pharmacist.

How do I make my child feel better?

- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and put limits on TV & screen time.
- Encourage fluids – like water, soup, juice and ice.
- Consider using a cool mist humidifier.
- Use children’s cough and cold medicines, as directed, to relieve symptoms.

What can I do to prevent my child from getting a cold or the flu?

- Teach and review with your child how to wash his or her hands using plenty of soap and warm water. Proper hand washing should take about 20 seconds or the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday”.
- Teach your child to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirt sleeve.
- Keep your child’s environment tobacco free.
- Minimize time spent with other children who have cough and cold symptoms.
- Schedule an annual well-child exam with your child’s pediatrician.
- Keep all of your child’s immunizations up-to-date; this includes an annual flu shot. CDC now recommends an annual flu shot for most children aged 6 months and up.
- Serve a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables.
- After your child is feeling better, disinfect all surfaces; wash bedding and air out the house if practical.
- Keep surfaces like door knobs, phones, remote controls, toys and keyboards clean.
- Always consult with your doctor or school nurse if you have any questions.