

## What is it?

The flu is caused by a virus. The virus goes around every year, usually in the winter. The flu causes headaches, muscle aches, coughing, runny nose, and sometimes throwing up.

Children's bodies can usually fight the virus without extra medicine. Antibiotics will not work against the virus. Getting your child a yearly flu shot can help prevent the flu.

## How can I help my child feel better?

- Your child needs lots of rest.
- Offer fluids often. Add 1 to 2 extra glasses of water or juice a day. For older children, warm fluids like soup or tea with honey can soothe a sore throat or cough.
  - If your child is over 1 to 6 years old, give ½ teaspoon.
  - If your child is over 6 years old, give 1 teaspoon.
- Use a cool-mist humidifier in your child's room. This can help your child breathe more easily. Be sure to clean the humidifier often using directions from the company that made it.
- Use warm water or saline (salt-water) nose drops to loosen mucus in your child's nose.
- Do not give your child cough medicine.
- Never give aspirin to a child under age 18 years old who has a cold or flu. It could cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.
- Ask your child's doctor about a flu vaccine for your child. They are for all children 6 months and older. It is given as a shot or a nasal spray.
- Keep your child home until the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours.

## When should we come to the Emergency Room?

- Is breathing faster or has a hard time taking breaths.
- Has signs of being very sick. This includes sleeping all the time, is not able to drink fluids, or says there is more pain when breathing.
- Has signs of dehydration. This includes not crying tears, dry mouth, no pee (urine) for 8 to 10 hours and poor activity.

## **ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse or clinic with questions or concerns or if your child has:**

- New ear pain or sinus pain.
- A sore throat lasts more than 2 days or is more painful.
- A temperature of 101° F or higher that lasts more than 2 days (48 hours).
- A cough that lasts more than 7 to 10 days.
- Severe or continued vomiting.
- A runny nose lasts more than 14 days.

## For more health and wellness information, check out this resource:

<https://kidshealth.org/ChildrensWi/en/parents>

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**