



# Blue Sky Pediatrics Asheville

Making every Child's day brighter by.....  
preventing flu

Newsletter



## Influenza and Prevention

Almost all children have had or will have influenza (flu) at some point during their childhood. The high fever and muscle aches caused by influenza are hard to ignore, often forcing the most active child to need a few days of rest and recovery. Influenza is a respiratory illness caused by a virus. Flu infections are highly contagious. This infection can spread easily in schools, households, and any other places where groups of people are together. Your child can catch the flu if someone around her has the infection and sneezes or coughs. She can also get the disease by touching a toy that has been contaminated by someone with the infection and then putting her hands or fingers into her mouth or nose. Children are most contagious during the 24 hours before symptoms begin and the period when their symptoms are at their

worst. Epidemics of influenza usually occur during the winter months, often lasting through March.

One of the most important things you can do to prevent flu is to have the vaccination against it. The CDC puts out a new flu vaccine each year based on the predicted type of flu that will be around us. So, if your child received the flu vaccine last year, she will still need to have the new vaccine this year. As most of you will remember from last year, there was a separate H1N1 vaccine required in addition to the regular flu vaccine. This year the CDC has combined that vaccine into one vaccine. Your child may still need to have two shots to be fully vaccinated depending on the age and flu vaccination history. Our office can help you determine if your child will need more than one vaccine this year for flu. **Our flu vaccine is in our office and ready to be given to your child.** We can give this during your child's regular visit for a physical examination or at one of our scheduled flu clinics. Give our office a call at 828-687-8709 to schedule an appointment.



## Signs and Symptoms

When your child gets the flu, she will probably develop a fever (temperature greater than 100 F), usually quite rapidly, often accompanied by chills, headaches, lack of energy, a dry cough, and muscle aches and pain. As the illness progresses, other symptoms such as a sore throat and runny or stuffy nose may develop and worsen. Some children have abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. Particularly in infants, influenza can cause ear infections, croup, bronchiolitis or pneumonia.

## What You Can Do If Your Child Is Sick

You're probably familiar with many of the home treatments for the flu. They've been used by generations of parents, although they are not as useful in getting rid of the virus as some parents think. Your child may benefit from getting plenty of rest, and she should drink liquids to prevent dehydration. To help make your feverish youngster more comfortable and reduce her temperature, you may give ibuprofen or acetaminophen (dosage based on child's weight). Keep in mind, though, that a fever is the body's way of fighting off the invading infection so it usually isn't necessary to "bring the fever down". **Do not give aspirin** to any child or teenager who has a temperature. The use of aspirin in such circumstances has been associated with a rare but very serious illness called Reye syndrome. Be sure to read the labels on any medicine you plan to give your child because some medicines contain aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) as part of their ingredients!

We recommend that you call our office early if your child has flu symptoms. In particular, let us know if a fever continues, your child complains of an earache, or she has a cough that does not go away. These are some of the common signs of complications associated with the flu, such as an ear infection, a sinus infection, or pneumonia. Complications are more likely to occur in a child who has an underlying health problem, including heart disease, lung disease, a weakened immune system, or a malignancy.

As always, we are here for you to answer any questions you might have about your child or to see them if needed. Remember that we have 24-hour phone nurse triage when our office is closed. We also have our own telephone nurse triage available anytime our office is open by one of our capable nurses that is most likely already familiar with you and your child. Our physicians are available to see your child Monday-Friday at our walk-in sick clinic, check-in between 7:45 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. We have always and continue to offer same day sick visit appointments when your child needs us.

Just remember that this is a busy time of year for us and we will always get your sick child seen as quickly as possible.

Excerpts from American Academy of Pediatrics

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