

INFLUENZA

- Influenza or *the flu* is a severe viral infection of the respiratory tract.
- It is extremely contagious through coughing & sneezing with an incubation period of 24-36 hours.
- Symptoms are **much** more severe than regular colds.
- Fever is almost always present. It can start suddenly & may last 3-5 days.
- There may be exhaustion or an overall feeling of tiredness & sleepiness.
- Muscle aches are common even to where it is sore to move or touch.
- Congestion, sneezing, coughing & watery eyes are present in both *the flu* and colds. The flu commonly leads into chest congestion or pain.
- Headache is also present in *the flu*.
- *The flu* can be prevented by getting a yearly **FLU SHOT.**

TREATMENT:

- Antibiotics do not cure *the flu*.
- Get lots of rest & fluids. Offer fever & pain relievers (Tylenol or Motrin) in children older than 2 months for fever or any other physical discomfort.
- Also offer cough (*Delsym*) & cold medicines like antihistamines (*Benadryl*) to help with symptom relief.
- Apply Vaseline, or antibiotic ointment to nasal openings to prevent & cure irritation or infection of the skin in the nasal area.
- Steam showers or a cool-mist humidifier in the bathroom will help to loosen congestion.
- Nasal saline drops & gentle suctioning may benefit infants & young children.
- Cool compresses with damp towels or cloths help reduce fever.
- If your child is old enough offer throat lozenges or warm salt-water gargle to soothe a sore-throat
- **REMEMBER TO WASH HANDS OFTEN TO PREVENT SPREAD!**
- *The flu* can be prevented by getting a yearly **FLU SHOT.**

Call or bring your child into the office IF:

- Fever is greater than 104 or lasts longer than 2-3 days.
- Cough interferes with eating or sleeping & is not relieved with treatments.
- Your child is breathing hard, wheezing or has noisy breathing.
- Your child develops a rash or is extremely fussy.
- Your child is very sleepy or inactive.
- Your child is younger than 2 months.
- Your child is not eating &/or not wetting diapers as often.
- Symptoms last longer than 10 days.
- You have any concerns or your child seems worse.

FACTS ABOUT COLDS & ALLERGIES

COLDS:

- Colds are caused by one of hundreds of common viruses.
- Easily passed from person to person by droplets from sneezing, coughing, or touching.
- Colds are not caused from cold air, getting wet or going outside.
- Symptoms of a cold may be fever, headache, tiredness, fussiness, stuffy nose, sneezing, watery eyes, sore throat or cough.
- There is no cure for a cold. Antibiotics do not work against colds.
- Treatment is to keep your child comfortable with plenty of fluids & pain relievers as needed in children older than 2 months.
- Treatment of symptoms, like cough & nasal congestion can be done with saline nose drops or over-the counter cough/cold medicines like *Delsym* or *Benadryl*.
- Antibiotics may be used to treat bacterial complications of a cold like ear, sinus or chest infections.
- To prevent colds, wash hands often & keep your distance from people who are coughing or sneezing.
- Please call the office if you have concerns about your child.

ALLERGIES (SEASONAL RHINITIS):

- Allergies are caused by airborne irritants or allergens that trigger histamine release in the body.
- Irritants like trees & grass pollens are common in the spring.
- Irritants like ragweed pollen, dust & mold are common in the fall.
- Symptoms of allergies may be runny or stuffy nose, itchy or watery eyes, headache, sneezing or sore throat.
- Prevention is the best treatment. Avoid the allergens by keeping your child indoors or showering/bathing at the end of the day. Cover mattresses & pillows with hypoallergenic covers.
- Treatment of symptoms with antihistamines like *Benadryl* at night or non-sedating loraditine (*Claritin* or *Alavert*) for day symptoms may be helpful.
- Nasal congestion can also be treated with saline nose drops.
- Antibiotics do not work against allergies.
- People who have allergies are more prone to problems like ear, sinus or chest infections. Antibiotics are sometimes used to treat these infections.
- There are many types of prescription medicines used for allergies.
- Please call the office if your child has persistent or severe symptoms.