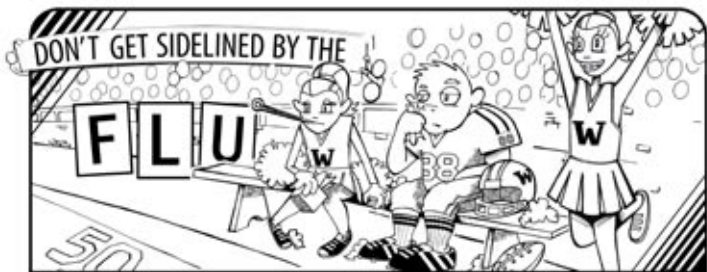


FLU SEASON ADVISORY: SPECIAL ADVICE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH CHRONIC DISEASES

It is especially important to protect children with chronic diseases from the flu, as they are at increased risk for complications and serious illness. If your child suffers from asthma, diabetes, heart disease, anemia, lung/kidney disease or AIDS/HIV, the flu can be very serious. Following is information on flu prevention and treatment to help protect your child. If you have additional questions, call your school nurse.



TAKE YOUR CHILD TO GET A FLU SHOT

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a flu shot is the first line of defense in preventing the flu. The flu vaccine is highly recommended by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for children with high risk conditions, including:
 - Children who have chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, including asthma.
 - Children who have underlying medical conditions that require hospitalization or regular doctor visits due to chronic disease including heart, lung or kidney disease, diabetes, asthma, anemia or immunosuppression (caused by medications or HIV infection).
 - Children and teenagers (ages six months to 18 years) who must take aspirin regularly and might be at risk for developing Reye syndrome if they get the flu.
 - Reye syndrome is a potentially fatal disease that causes detrimental effects to many organs, especially the brain and liver.
- Parents and other family members in close contact with a child who suffers from a chronic condition should also get vaccinated.
- While October or November are the best times for a child with chronic conditions to get the flu shot, it's never too late in the flu season to get vaccinated.

- The flu shot becomes effective about two weeks after vaccination.
- The American Lung Association (ALA), in Partnership with Maxim Health Systems, has developed an electronic influenza vaccine clinic locator. Go to www.flucliniclocator.org, enter a zip code and receive information about clinics scheduled in your area.

KNOW WHEN TO SEE THE DOCTOR

- If your child has symptoms of the flu, such as high fever, severe headache, muscle and body aches, exhaustion or dry cough, **you need to see a doctor immediately.**
- A doctor can prescribe antiviral medication to help lessen the symptoms and reduce the risk of complications.
- To be effective, antiviral medication must be taken within 48 hours after flu symptoms begin.
 - If taken within the proper timeframe (within 48 hours after flu symptoms set in), antiviral medication can reduce flu symptoms and shorten the number of days a person is sick, which can also help stop the spread of the virus.
- Additionally, if someone in your family gets the flu, a doctor can prescribe antiviral medication for other members of the household to prevent the virus.
 - Studies show some antiviral medications are up to 92 percent effective in preventing the flu when taken once daily for seven days.
- If flu symptoms don't improve or get worse after three to four days, **call the doctor immediately.**
- Also, call your doctor if your child begins to feel better, but then develops signs of a more serious problem, such as a stomach ache, vomiting, high fever, shaking chills, chest pain or coughing with thick, yellow-green mucus.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE INFLUENZA VIRUS, VISIT WWW.CDC.GOV/FLU.

