

Flu Season

Be ready, but don't panic

You may be concerned about your child's health when flu is spreading. Be prepared and protect your family, but don't panic and rush to the emergency department at the first sign of fever.

Is the 2009 H1N1 virus still spreading?

The 2009 H1N1 virus is still spreading and likely will for years to come. In a way, it's the new seasonal flu.

Are the symptoms of the flu and a cold similar?

The symptoms of H1N1 flu and other seasonal flu are the same. They include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting. One difference between a cold and the flu is that a cold is centered on the nose. With the flu, you feel like your whole body is sick.

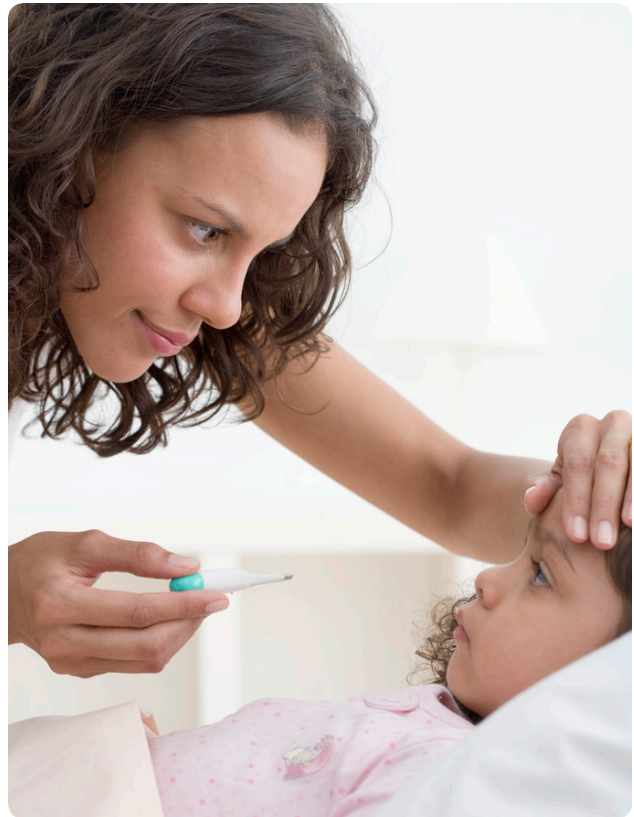
What is a fever?

A fever is a body temperature over 100.4 degrees F (or 38.0 degrees C). Most of the time fever is not harmful. Fever is the body's way of fighting an illness. There is no need to give medicine for a fever under 102 degrees F.

To learn how to treat higher fevers, visit www.seattlechildrens.org or call your child's doctor.

Should I take my child with mild flu symptoms to the hospital?

Most people with the flu do not require medical care. If your child has fever **and** symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny nose or a stuffy nose, call their doctor before coming to the



hospital. The doctor will decide if your child needs to come to the hospital or not.

Also call your child's doctor if your child is under 5 and has flu symptoms. Children under 5 are at higher risk for complications from the flu.

If your child doesn't have a doctor, call the Children's Resource Line at 206-987-2500 or the Community Health Access Program at 800-756-5437.

Kids that have only mild cold or flu symptoms can be treated at home. If you take them to the hospital with only mild symptoms, you will have a long wait. Hospitals must see sicker patients first.

What if my child has more serious symptoms?

Call 911 if your child:

- Is not waking up or not interacting
- Has a hard time breathing and has bluish lips

Call your doctor now if your child:

- Has fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Shows signs of dehydration (very dry mouth or no urine in more than 8 hours)
- Is so irritable that they do not want to be held
- Has flu that has improved, but then returns with fever and worse cough
- Has a fever with a rash
- Has had a high fever for 5 or more days

My child has flu symptoms and has a chronic health condition. What should I do?

Children with chronic health conditions, like heart or lung disease; diabetes; asthma; a neurodevelopmental condition or a neuromuscular disorder can get very sick from the flu. If your child has a chronic health condition and has flu symptoms, call your child's doctor. Your child may need to be tested and treated for the flu. Your child should also get the flu vaccine as soon as it is available.

Can my child go to daycare or school when they have the flu?

People with the flu should stay home from work or school. They should stay home while they are sick and for at least one day after they no longer have a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.

How can I protect my family against the flu and other illnesses?

- Wash your own and your child's hands often with soap and warm water.
- Cover noses and mouths with a tissue or the crook of your elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Remind children to keep their hands away from their face.
- Clean shared spaces often, including phone receivers, keyboards and tables.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as spoons, toothbrushes and towels.

Is vaccine the best way to prevent the flu?

Yes! Vaccinate your child against the flu each year. The 2011-2012 flu vaccine will protect your child against three strains of flu virus, including the 2009 H1N1 virus.

Also ask anyone who takes care of your child or lives in your home to get the flu vaccine each year. Don't forget to get the vaccine yourself!

To Learn More

- Visit www.seattlechildrens.org for more information on symptoms, prevention and vaccines
- Seattle Children's Resource Line
206-987-2500 or 866-987-2500
toll-free Washington, Alaska, Montana, Idaho
- Your child's healthcare provider

Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call Marketing Communications at 206-987-5205 or 206-987-2280 (TTY).

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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