

# Flu Season

## Be ready, but don't panic

You may be concerned about your child's health when the flu and COVID-19 are spreading. Be prepared and protect your family, but don't panic and rush to the emergency department at the first sign of fever.

### Are the symptoms of the flu, COVID-19 and a cold similar?

Yes, the flu, COVID-19 and a cold share many of the same symptoms.

Flu and COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting. Learn more about the similarities and differences between flu and COVID-19 at [cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm).

### What is a fever?

A fever is a body temperature over 100.4 degrees F (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.

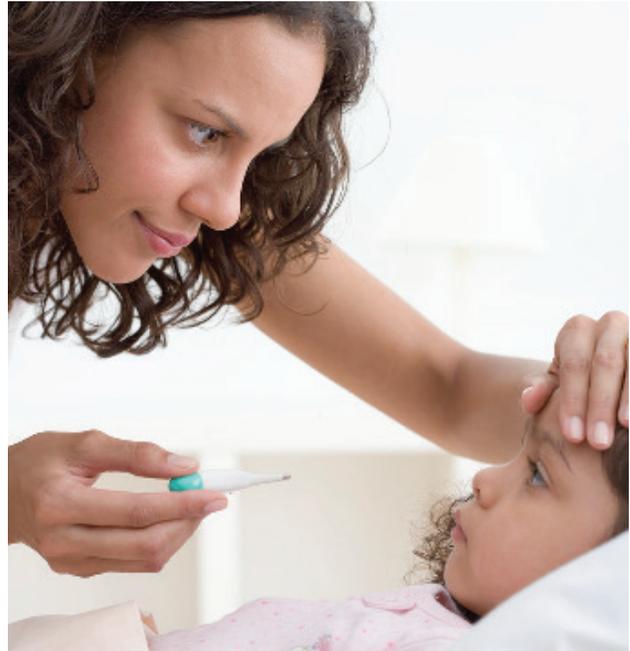
To learn how to treat a fever, visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/prevention/fever](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/prevention/fever) or call your child's doctor.

### Should I take my child with mild flu or COVID-19 symptoms to the hospital?

Most people with the flu or COVID-19 do not require medical care, but they may require testing. If your child is sick call their doctor. If you think they need care, 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 Community Health Access Program at 800-756-5437.



Kids who have only mild cold, flu or COVID-19 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. Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html) to learn how to care for someone with COVID-19 symptoms.

### 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 or COVID-19 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 or COVID-19. If your child has a chronic health condition and has flu or COVID-19 symptoms, call your child's doctor. 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 or COVID-19?**

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.

The CDC has guidelines for how long your child should stay home if they have COVID-19. Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html). Ask your child's doctor for advice based on your child's situation.

### **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. Wash for at least 20 seconds. Children should sing their ABCs twice in a row while washing their hands to ensure the proper length of time.
- Wear a cloth face covering when in public and when around people you don't live with.
- Follow physical distancing guidelines when in public. Stay at least 6 feet away from people who don't live in your house.

- Cover noses and mouths with a tissue or the crook of your elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Remind children to keep their hands away from their face to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean surfaces often, including toys, doorknobs, 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! All people 6 months and older should get the flu vaccine each year. A flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu, and getting it early is best.

Be sure to 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!

### **Is there a vaccine to prevent COVID-19?**

There is not yet a vaccine available to prevent COVID-19, but doctors and scientists are working on one. The flu vaccine will not prevent COVID-19, but it's important to get the flu vaccine so the healthcare system isn't overloaded if there are more surges of COVID-19. Getting the flu vaccine can also help you prevent getting the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

#### **To Learn More**

- Visit [seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/prevention/about-the-flu](https://seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/prevention/about-the-flu) to learn more about vaccines, symptoms and treatment
- Contact your child's healthcare provider

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Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call Marketing Communications at 206-987-5323.

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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