

From the Health Office

Tis' the Season for **flu** and **stomach flu**!

FLU

What is the influenza (the flu)?

The flu is an illness caused by the influenza virus, which affects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). The flu is spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks and the virus is released into the air. This is the same way the common cold is spread, however, with the flu there may be serious complications in some people.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

The flu is a respiratory illness. The symptoms include: fever, headache, extreme fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches.

What are the things you can do to protect yourselves and your family?

- Wash hands frequently, especially before eating. Germs are spread easily from hand to hand and hand to mouth contact.
- Dispose of soiled tissues properly. Do not leave them lying around.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Eat well-balanced meals. Pay particular attention to good fluid intake.
- Many doctors recommend that their patients get a flu vaccine.

Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68):

EV-D68 has similar symptoms as a typical cold, however this virus **can lead to severe respiratory symptoms**. Symptoms may include wheezing or difficulty breathing. Children with shortness of breath or obvious worsening symptoms, especially in children with asthma, should follow up with their physician or go to the emergency room.

STOMACH FLU

Gastroenteritis, sometimes called the stomach flu, is an inflammation of the stomach and intestines. It can be caused by an infection with certain bacteria or viruses or by food poisoning. The symptoms of gastroenteritis include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Sometimes fever

Stomach flu usually goes away without medical treatment in 1 or 2 days. If you still have symptoms past 48 hours, call your doctor's office.

Home treatment can relieve the symptoms of stomach flu and prevent problems, such as dehydration. If you have vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain without other symptoms:

- Rest until you are feeling better
- If you are vomiting, try to wait an hour before having any sips of liquids to let your stomach settle.

- When you are able to keep liquids down, drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. You may find that taking small, frequent sips of a beverage is easier on the stomach than trying to drink a whole glass at once. Avoid caffeinated drinks.
- Try eating several small meals instead of 2 or 3 large ones. Eat mild foods, such as rice, dry toast or crackers, bananas, and applesauce. Avoid spicy foods, other fruits (orange juice), and drinks that contain caffeine until 48 hours after all symptoms have gone away.

The Morning Decision???

The tough morning decision--"Do I send my child to school??" Just a reminder ...DO NOT send your child to school if ANY of these symptoms or signs are present in the previous 24 hours;

- *Vomiting, nausea, and abdominal pain
- *Elevated temperature (100 degrees or higher)
- *Repeated diarrhea
- *Acute cold, sore throat or persistent cough
- *Red inflamed or discharge from eyes
- *Unusual lethargic behavior

If you think your child is symptomatic, it is best to keep them at home rather than send them to school where they can be infected with some other virus, and/or spread whatever virus they have. Extra rest is always a good way to help the body recover. As I have mentioned, please keep your children home until they are **fever-free for 24 hours**, and **have not thrown up in 24 hours** AND are eating and drinking normally. Finally, if you are unsure as to what to do, you should always contact your physician for advice.

Please feel free to contact the health office, if you have any questions or concerns (419) 874-3904.

Stay Healthy!

Mary Martin, RN, MSN
School Nurse