

Is there a medicine to treat the flu?

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat influenza illness. They can make people feel better and get better sooner. Antivirals can mean the difference between having milder illness instead of very serious illness that could result in a hospital stay. Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics, which fight against bacterial infections. They work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. It's very important that antiviral drugs are used early to treat the flu in people who are very sick (for example, people who are in the hospital) or who are at high risk of serious flu complications. Other people with flu illness may also benefit from taking antiviral drugs. These drugs can be given to children and pregnant women.

What are some of the other ways I can protect my child against the flu?

In addition to getting vaccinated, you and your children can take everyday steps to help prevent the spread of germs:

These include the following:

- ▶ Stay away from people who are sick.
- ▶ If your child is sick with flu illness, try to keep him or her in a separate room from others in the household, if possible.
- ▶ CDC recommends that your sick child stay home for at least 24 hours after his or her fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- ▶ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after it has been used.
- ▶ Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- ▶ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- ▶ Clean and disinfect hard surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs, including bathroom

surfaces, kitchen counters and toys for children. Clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

These everyday steps are a good way to reduce your chances of getting sick. However, a yearly flu vaccine is the best protection against flu illness.



IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is 5 years and older and does not have other health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

Children younger than 5 years of age – especially those younger than 2 years old – and children with certain chronic conditions, including asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system, are at high risk of serious flu-related complications. If your child is at high risk for flu complications, call your doctor or take them to the doctor right away if they develop flu symptoms.

What if my child seems very sick?

Even previously healthy children can get very sick from the flu.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is 5 years or older and does not have other health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed:

- ▶ Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- ▶ Bluish or gray skin color
- ▶ Not drinking enough fluids (not going to the bathroom or not making as much urine as they normally do)
- ▶ Severe or persistent vomiting
- ▶ Not waking up or not interacting
- ▶ Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- ▶ Flu symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- ▶ Has other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or asthma) and develops flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough.

Can my child go to school, day care or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid giving the flu to other children or caregivers.

When can my child go back to school after having the flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu or call 800-CDC-INFO

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