

Cold and flu season continues and we at Haviland Avenue School have been informed of cases in which our students have been diagnosed with influenza or have flu like symptoms. CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone ages 6 months and older as the first and most important step in protecting against influenza and its potentially serious complications.

Please, be aware of the symptoms, seek treatment, and in order to help us prevent the spread of flu to our school community keep your child home until they are symptom and fever free for 24 hours or longer without the use of a fever reducing medication.

### **Flu Symptoms**

Influenza (also known as flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Flu is different from a cold. Flu usually comes on suddenly. People who are sick with flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

### **Flu Complications**

Most people who get flu will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some people will develop complications (such as pneumonia) as a result of flu, some of which can be life-threatening and result in death.

Sinus and ear infections are examples of moderate complications from flu, while pneumonia is a serious flu complication that can result from either influenza virus infection alone or from co-infection of flu virus and bacteria. Other possible serious complications triggered by flu can include inflammation of the heart (myocarditis), brain (encephalitis) or muscle (myositis, rhabdomyolysis) tissues, and multi-organ failure (for example, respiratory and kidney failure). Flu virus infection of the respiratory tract can trigger an extreme inflammatory response in the body and can lead to [sepsis](#), the body's life-threatening response to infection. Flu also can make chronic medical problems worse. For example, people with [asthma](#) may experience asthma attacks while they have flu, and people with [chronic heart disease](#) may experience a worsening of this condition triggered by flu.

### **People at High Risk from Flu**

Anyone can get sick with flu (even healthy people), and serious problems related to flu can happen at any age, but [some people are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications](#) if they get sick. This includes people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women and children younger than 5 years, but especially those younger than 2 years old.

### **What are the emergency warning signs of flu sickness?**

#### **In children**

#### **In adults**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fast breathing or trouble breathing</li><li>• Bluish skin color</li><li>• Not drinking enough fluids</li><li>• Not waking up or not interacting</li><li>• Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held</li><li>• Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough</li><li>• Fever with a rash</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath</li><li>• Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen</li><li>• Sudden dizziness</li><li>• Confusion</li><li>• Severe or persistent vomiting</li><li>• Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough</li></ul> |
|---|---|

### **In addition to the signs above, get medical help right away for any infant who has any of these signs:**

- Being unable to eat
- Has trouble breathing
- Has no tears when crying
- Significantly fewer wet diapers than normal

## 3 Actions recommended by the CDC to Fight the Flu

### 1. Vaccinate

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone ages 6 months and older as the first and most important step in protecting against influenza and its potentially serious complications

### 2. Stop Germs

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
- [Wash your 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 surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like flu.

### 3. Antiviral Drugs

- CDC recommends prompt antiviral treatment of people who are severely ill and people who are at high risk of serious flu complications who develop flu symptoms. This drug requires a physician's order and is most effective when started within 48 hours of getting sick