



## Flu Information for Pediatric Patients (October 1, 2009)

Symptoms of the **seasonal flu** in children include tiredness and fever. Children may complain they feel achy and thirsty. If your child is not an infant, flu symptoms may be much like a adult flu symptoms: headache, fever, sore throat, muscle aches, cough and possibly diarrhea or vomiting.

Many people are concerned about the **H1N1 flu**. It can be spread easily from person-to-person, like the seasonal flu.

Symptoms of the **H1N1 flu** include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and tiredness. Diarrhea and vomiting can also be symptoms.

You should call your child's doctor if you think your child has the flu and has any underlying conditions such as asthma, heart disease, lung problems, or is pregnant, as these conditions can worsen with the flu.

Fever can come on suddenly in children and last three to five days. Call your doctor if:

- Your child is under 3 months old and has a fever above 100.4 degrees
- Your child is 3 to 5 months old and has a fever above 102 degrees
- Your child is 5 years or older with a fever of 104 degrees

Call your child's doctor if your child of any age has had a fever for more than three days.

If your child is not drinking as they usually do and they have a fever, diarrhea or are vomiting, they can become dehydrated. Dehydration is especially serious in infants and very young children. Signs of dehydration in children include decreased or absent tears when crying, being difficult to arouse from sleep, less urine production than usual, dark urine, dizziness, dry mouth and increased thirst.

Call your child's doctor if you think he or she has become dehydrated. You should also call the doctor if your child experiences the following:

- A cough or fever that goes away after 24 hours and then returns
- A fever with a stiff neck, bad headache, severe sore throat, an earache or a rash
- Green, brown or bloody mucus when coughing
- Severe vomiting
- Not feeling better after a week

Seek emergency medical care if your child becomes ill and has the following symptoms:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Chest pain
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking fluids

- Not urinating as much as usual
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or interacting as usual
- Confusion
- Not wanting to be held
- Fever returns after being absent for a day, or a significant change in fever pattern occurs; for example, your child's fever was 101 degrees for several days and is now 103 degrees

To treat a fever, try these steps:

- Give fever-reducing medicines like acetaminophen, such as Tylenol or a store brand, or ibuprofen, such as Advil or Motrin. Make sure you read the label to give the right amount of medicine to your child. Do not give aspirin to children with flu symptoms. This can lead to a dangerous condition known as Reye's syndrome.
- Keep the room comfortably cool and dress your child in lightweight clothing.
- You can also cool your child with a lukewarm bath. Do not use an alcohol rub or cold water baths.
- Your child should drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration—water is best, but fruit or vegetable juice, soup or broth or Pedialyte also work. If you are breastfeeding your child, continue to do so.

You should check with your child's school for any guidelines on when he/she may return after a flu-like illness. In general, your child may return to school when he/she experiences no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. In general, children do not need a note from a physician to return to school.

If you would like more information on seasonal flu or H1N1 flu, please visit the Centers for Disease Control web site at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu).