



What You Need to Know About FLU IN KIDS

What is the **FLU**?

- Influenza, or “the flu,” is a highly contagious viral infection of the respiratory tract (nose, throat and lungs).
- The flu is often confused with the common cold, but flu symptoms tend to develop quickly (usually 1 to 4 days after a person is exposed to the flu virus) and are usually more severe than the typical sneezing and congestion associated with a cold.
- Influenza is often accompanied with fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are also common symptoms in children.
- A person infected with the flu virus will typically suffer from the illness for approximately 7 to 10 days, with 5 to 6 days of limited activity and about 3 days of bed rest.



Who Should Get **VACCINATED** Against the Flu?

- Anyone who wants to reduce the risk of becoming ill with influenza or of spreading it to others should get an annual influenza vaccination.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all children 6 months through 18 years of age get vaccinated against the flu every year. One vaccination a year is all that is needed to protect against influenza, except for children younger than 9 years of age who need 2 doses at least 1 month apart the first year they are vaccinated.
- In addition, all household contacts (parents, grandparents, siblings, etc.) and caregivers of children from birth up to age 5 (especially younger than 6 months), adults 50 years and older, and persons with high-risk medical conditions (diabetes, asthma, heart disease, compromised immune system) should get vaccinated against the flu every year.

When is the Best **TIME** to Get Vaccinated?

- The flu virus tends to spread from October to May, with most cases occurring in February.
- Influenza vaccination typically begins in October; however, vaccinations can be given at any time during the flu season — even getting a vaccination later in the season (December through March) can still help protect you from influenza.



Are Kids Flu **TRANSMITTERS**?

- Children are 2-to-3 times more likely than adults to get sick with the flu because of their less-developed immune systems.
- School-aged children also tend to have higher rates of influenza infection because of their close contact with friends and classmates who frequently spread germs among one another. In fact, during bad flu seasons, nearly 30 percent of school-aged children get sick and miss about 38 million school days a year overall.
- The flu vaccine can help children stay free of influenza during the flu season, and potentially help stop the spread of the virus to their families and communities.



How **SERIOUS** is the Flu in Kids?

- Influenza is a serious disease that kills nearly 100 American children younger than 5 years of age every year. In fact, more children die from flu than from chicken pox, whooping cough and measles combined.



- Approximately 20,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized due to the flu each year.

**ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT
THE FLU VACCINE FOR YOUR
CHILD(REN) AND YOURSELF!**

About Families Fighting Flu

Families Fighting Flu is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization established in 2004 that is made up of families and healthcare practitioners. Each family has experienced first-hand the death of a child due to the flu or has had a child experience severe medical complications from the flu. We are dedicated to educating people about the severity of influenza and the importance of vaccinating children against the flu every year. Through education and advocacy, we hope to improve the rates of childhood flu vaccinations and help reduce the number of childhood illnesses and deaths caused by the flu each year.

For more information about Families Fighting Flu, visit www.familiesfightingflu.org