

Influenza

Our doctors think that your child or teen may have the influenza (flu) virus. They have decided that your child can be watched at home, as long as the symptoms stay mild. Most children and teenagers with influenza do not need to be admitted to hospital. Almost all will get better at home, as they do with many other viruses.

Does my child or teen need a test for influenza?

Most children and youth do not need to be tested. We may test some very young children (under 2) or those with health problems that could put them at risk of getting sicker. These tests tell us if children have influenza, in case they need to be admitted to hospital later on. We don't routinely contact families with test results.



How is influenza spread?

Influenza is passed from person to person when germs get in the nose or throat. Coughs and sneezes release the germs into the air, where they can be breathed in by others. These germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters, keyboards and door knobs. You can pick these germs up on your hands if you touch these surfaces. You can get sick if you then touch your mouth, nose or eyes.

What symptoms does influenza cause?

Influenza symptoms include:

- Fever, which may last 7 days or more;
- Cough, which may sound either 'wet' or 'dry'. This is caused by irritation of the breathing tubes and increased mucous (phlegm);
- Shortness of breath. Breathing may also be faster when your child has a fever;
- Muscle aches;
- Fatigue-it is normal for your child or teen to want to sleep or take more naps;
- Headache;
- Sore throat;
- Lack of appetite. Sick children and youth often don't want to eat. It's important that they keep drinking fluids that have calories (like milk, juice or Pedialyte ®);
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea .

How can I help my child or teen feel better?

- Encourage your child to drink extra fluids to stay hydrated;
- Treat fever and pain with appropriate medications (ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Make sure to give the right dose based on your child's weight, not age;
- Encourage your child to rest;
- Follow directions carefully for any prescribed medications.





Preventing the spread of influenza



1. Keep your child or teen at home.

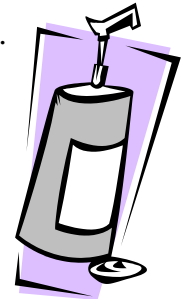
- Do not let your child out in public (that means no movies, restaurants, shopping malls, sports events or meetings).
- Children can go back to school, daycare and usual activities 24 hours after the fever is gone, as long as they are feeling better. They do not need a doctor's note to return to school or activities.
- Family members with the flu should stay home from work until they have no fever for 24 hours, are feeling better and all other symptoms are gone (a mild cough is OK).

2. Minimize close contact between your child and the rest of the family.

Don't let your child share things like cups, eating utensils or toys that have not been well cleaned.

3. Teach everyone "cough etiquette":

- Cover the nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing;
- Use tissues for mucous and throw the tissues into a garbage right away after using;
- Wash hands after coughing, sneezing or blowing noses;
- Cough into the elbow if tissues are not available.



4. Keep hands clean.

Clean your hands and your child's hands:

- With an alcohol hand gel or soap and water for 15 seconds;
- After sneezing, coughing, or any contact with mucous from the nose or mouth, or stool (poop!);
- Before and after eating;
- After using the bathroom.

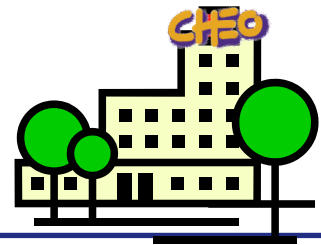
5. Keep surfaces clean.

Use regular cleaning products to clean areas that your child uses everyday, like counters, taps, bathrooms, and personal care items.



See your primary care provider or return to the emergency department if your child:

- Seems to be getting more sick;
- Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes) or is losing too much fluid from vomiting or diarrhea:
 - Less than 4 wet diapers in 24 hours for babies under 2 years;
 - No urine (pee) in 8-10 hours children over 2 years;
- Has a fever for more than 2-3 days, or develops a new fever ;
- Becomes very sleepy or hard to wake, even when the fever is down;
- Is having trouble breathing or is very short of breath;
- Has severe body aches or weakness;
- Develops a rash or poor skin colour;
- Passes out or feels very dizzy when walking.



Numbers to know



Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000
Health Information from
Registered Nurses,
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Ottawa Public Health Info Line
613-580-OPHI (6744)
Toll free:
1-866-426-8885

Ottawa Public Health
www.ottawa.ca/residents/

Québec Info-Santé,
8-1-1
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

