

Cold and Flu Guidelines

When to keep your child home from school due to illness:

Below are the district guidelines for deciding if your child is well enough to come back to school. We certainly want all of our students (and staff) healthy here at school, so please adhere to guidelines below.

A child should remain home when an illness such as a sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, nausea or cough will prevent them from functioning in class. It is best practice to keep your child home until food is tolerated. Children should also stay home until no fever has been present for 24 hours. Recognizing early signs and symptoms and taking preventative measures to adequately care for your child is most beneficial. Many times a child cannot concentrate on classroom activities and may expose children to their illness.

Please remember to use the attendance line (24 hours a day) to report when your child has a communicable disease such as influenza, pertussis, chicken pox, strep throat, fifth disease, mononucleosis, ringworm, pink eye or the nuisance condition of head lice.

Providing a healthy atmosphere in the school benefits everyone.

If you have further questions, please contact the District Nurse, Joanne Schoohs, at 608-829-9056, or the Public Health Madison and Dane County at 608-266-4821.

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)

Is it a Cold, Flu, or Pertussis?



The Myth of the "Stomach Flu"

Many people use the term "stomach flu" to describe illnesses with nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. These symptoms can be caused by many different viruses, bacteria, or even parasites. The "flu" is a term that generally refers to influenza. While vomiting, diarrhea, and being nauseous or "sick to your stomach" can sometimes be related to the flu — particularly in children — these problems are rarely the main symptoms of influenza. The flu is a respiratory disease and not a stomach or intestinal disease.

Is it a Cold, Flu or Pertussis?

Colds, flu and Pertussis are highly contagious and, in the initial stages, might seem alike. Check the following table for a comparison of the symptoms for each illness.

Symptom		Influenza ("Flu")	Cold (Viral URI)	Pertussis
Fever		Usually present and high (102-104°F or 39-40°C); typically lasts 3-4 days	Uncommon	Uncommon If present, typically low-grade
Headache		Very common	Uncommon	Uncommon
Aches and pains, muscle aches, chest discomfort		Common, Often severe	Slight to Moderate	Uncommon
Fatigue and weakness		Moderate - severe; can last up to 14-21 days	Mild	Mild to moderate
Extreme exhaustion		Very common early in illness	Extremely Rare	Rare
Stuffy or runny nose		Sometimes	Common	Common, early in the disease
Sneezing		Sometimes	Common	Common, early in the disease
Sore throat		Sometimes	Common	Uncommon
C O U G H	Character	Non-productive ("dry") cough is typical; nocturnal cough rare	Hacking cough, often productive; nocturnal cough rare; usually responds to cough medications	Variable character; fits / paroxysms and nocturnal cough are common; generally not responsive to cough medications
	Severity	Moderate	Mild to Moderate	Variable; can be mild in adults and very severe in infants and young children
	Duration	Typically 3-7 days; occasionally to 14 days	Typically 3-7 days	Persistent cough, almost always >1week, usually 2-6 weeks, sometimes 10+ weeks
	Paroxysms	Uncommon	Rare	Common
Infectious Period		1-2 d before symptom onset to 5-10 days after	Variable; typically 4-7 days after symptom onset; can be longer	From start of catarrhal phase (before cough) to 21 days after cough onset*

*or until taking 5 days of appropriate anti-pertussis antibiotics, or until a nasopharyngeal pertussis PCR is negative, whichever occurs first.