# Flu In Children

Influenza is a respiratory infection caused by a virus. Flu is a serious illness. Since it is caused by a virus, antibiotics are not useful against it. Your child's caregiver may prescribe antiviral medicines to shorten the illness and lessen the severity. Symptoms include fever, headache, sore throat, cough, and muscle aches. The fever will often last up to 5 days. Your child may have a persistent cough and feel tired for 2-3 weeks.

The treatment is to make your child comfortable. Only give your child over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. Do not use aspirin. Use a cool mist vaporizer to help relieve cough and congestion. Encourage large amounts of liquids. Cough syrups can be helpful for coughs that keep a child awake.

## SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF YOUR CHILD HAS:

- Fever that lasts more than 5 days.
- Fever returns after being gone for a day or more.
- Ear pain (in young children and babies this may cause crying and waking at night).
- Chest pain.
- Cough that is worsening or causing vomiting.

## SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOUR CHILD HAS:

- Trouble breathing or fast breathing.
- Signs of dehydration:
  - Confusion or decreased alertness.
  - Tiredness and sluggishness (*lethargy*).
  - Rapid breathing or pulse.
  - Weakness or limpness
  - Sunken eyes.
  - Pale skin.
  - Dry mouth.
  - No tears when crying.
  - No urine for 8 hours.
- Confusion or unusual sleepiness.
- Convulsions (*seizures*).
- Severe neck pain or stiffness.
- Severe headache.
- Severe muscle pain or swelling.

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