

Pediatrics, P.C.

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H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu)



Symptoms of swine flu in children

Classically, children with influenza have a sudden onset of high fever, chills, and respiratory symptoms. Children will develop mild nasal congestion and cough. Older children may complain of headache, scratchy or sore throat, and muscle aches.

Influenza is very different from the common cold or upper respiratory infection. Nasal symptoms without fever is likely a cold. Fever and body aches without nasal symptoms is likely influenza.

What to do if your child has flu-like symptoms

If your child has mild illness, he or she should stay home from school or child care. Do not let them return until they have been fever free for 24 hours.

Any child younger than 3 months who has a fever should see a pediatrician. A fever is the body's way of fighting off an infection. If a child older than 3 months has a fever and acts sick, he should be seen. If he is acting well, he may be monitored for a day or two depending on his other symptoms.

If a child with a chronic medical condition develops flu like symptoms, they should see their pediatrician. A chronic medical condition would include a history of heart or lung problems, weakened immune system, chronic kidney disease, sickle cell disease, asthma, or a severe neurological disorder.

Signs that warrant a visit to the office include lethargy, irritability, fast breathing, vomiting, and inattention to the environment.

If your child is uncomfortable or has a fever, you can give them medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil). Do not give aspirin-containing products.

If your child is not eating well, encourage him or her to drink plenty of liquids.

Wash your hands with soap and water frequently. Use an alcohol-based hand gel sanitizer if soap is not available.

Call your pediatrician for advice. Your doctor can help you decide whether your child needs to be seen or if he needs to be tested and/or treated for swine influenza.

Signs that indicate your child should be examined

Trouble breathing or fast breathing

Not urinating as much as usual

Being irritable even after your child's fever goes down

Not waking up normally or interacting normally

The fever goes down and flu symptoms get better, but then get worse again 1 to 2 days later

Not drinking well

Bluish or gray skin color

Rash



Advice for parents with children in school or child care

Parents should not preventatively take children out of child care or school unless recommended by public health authorities. If your school or child care program closes and your children are healthy, you should keep them home and prevent participation in social activities. Working parents may team up with other parents to take turns staying home with children. Ideally, groups should be kept to less than six children to minimize the risk of spreading germs.

Parents should remind their children about proper hygiene. Children should sneeze or cough into a tissue or sleeve. Encourage frequent handwashing or use of alcohol-based hand gel sanitizer.

Parents should advise children to visit the school nurse if they feel sick during school hours. Children who are sick should stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone.

Pediatrics PC will be administering flu shots & flu mist starting in mid-September.

Additionally, the Center for Disease control is working on a vaccine for protection against H1N1.

More information on the H1N1 vaccine can be found on the Center for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov.