

Flu Season is upon us and it is important to keep our kids healthy!

Although any child can be infected with the flu virus it is especially dangerous when involving children with chronic health problems like asthma, diabetes and disorder of the brain or nervous system. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the best way to prevent your child from getting the flu is to take him/her to get a flu vaccine.

It is important to know the difference between a cold and the flu. The most common symptoms of the flu include high fever, severe headache, muscle and body aches, chills, sore throat, exhaustion and dry cough however they may also have nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Often cold symptoms come on gradually and they include stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, sore throat and hacking cough.

SIMPLE STEPS FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD HEALTHY:

- Advise child to wash hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, cover their mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing-preferably into the inside of their elbow or with a tissue and disposing of the tissue immediately into the trash.
- Advise child not to share drinks, water bottles, eating utensils, or food with other children.
- You can help prevent the flu from spreading at home by disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, toys, and other commonly shared items.
- You can prevent spreading illness to others by keeping your sick children home from school until they have been without fever for 24 hours, without the help of medication. While at home it is important for your sick child to get rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- If flu is contracted some children may benefit from an antiviral medication, which can be prescribed by a physician to help lessen the number of days that a child is sick with the virus. To be effective, an antiviral medication should be taken no later than 48 hours after the first sign of flu symptoms. If a child has a chronic health problem and has been exposed to the flu, a doctor may also prescribe the antiviral to prevent the child from getting the sick. If antiviral is taken within the first 12-48 hours of exposure to the flu virus there is an 89 percent chance the medication will keep him/her from getting sick.