

FLU FACTS

It's not always easy to tell if your child has the flu. The illness comes on fast and is more intense than a cold. Kids tend to feel worse during the first 2 or 3 days they're sick.

Symptoms include –

- Aches and pains, low energy
- Headache
- Cough or noisy breathing
- Sore throat and runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

What Causes It?

Influenza, commonly called the 'flu', is an infection caused by influenza A or B viruses. Each year infections are caused by slightly different strains of the virus. Occasionally one of these strains can cause a more widespread or severe outbreak.

How Does It Spread?

- The flu is highly contagious, particularly when kids share close quarters like they do in school classrooms. It spreads when they inhale droplets that are coughed up or sneezed by an infected person, or when they come in direct contact with mucus or spit from someone who has the flu.
- Students with influenza are contagious from the day before symptoms begin until a few days after. It can easily move from student to student as they share things like pencils, toys, computers, remotes, spoons etc. Hand to hand contact is another main method.

Prevention

Good hygiene habits can reduce the chance of getting influenza or passing it onto others.

- Regular hand washing
- Not sharing cups or cutlery
- Covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze – if you do not have a tissue to use, cough/sneeze into your elbow
- Use tissues and dispose correctly.

Treatment

- Plenty of rest and fluids
- Paracetamol for pain or discomfort. Do not give aspirin to your child if they have influenza as this can lead to serious side effects
- Antibiotics don't work. They treat bacterial infections, and the flu is a viral infection
- If your child has any warning signs of severe illness or is at risk of severe illness, seek urgent medical advice – Warning signs of severe illness include poor feeding, dehydration and difficulty breathing