

# WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD GETS SICK WITH THE FLU



Influenza, or the flu, is a dangerous germ that affects your nose, lungs and throat. The flu spreads easily between people. Some people get very sick, and some people just have a mild case. Children younger than 5 are more likely to get very sick. People with chronic health conditions, like asthma and diabetes, are also at risk to get very sick. The good news is, most children will get better without needing to go to the doctor. This guide will help you understand how to take care of a child with the flu at home, as well as helping you know when they need to see a doctor.

## Severe Signs of the Flu

If you notice any of these symptoms in your child, it's time to call the doctor:

- Fast or trouble breathing
- Bluish lips or face
- Chest pain
- Severe muscle pain
- Dehydration (Not getting enough liquids)
- Not alert or interacting when awake
- Seizures
- Fever above 104°F



## Treatment

In some cases, your child will need prescribed medicine to get better from the flu. This medicine works best if your child starts taking it in the first 2 days (48 hours) of getting sick. If your child is high risk or has a really bad case, it's important to call your doctor right away.

If your child has a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius), you can use medicine to bring down the fever. Some are sold at the store (over-the-counter). Your child may also need medicine you need a prescription for.



For more information visit our San Diego Influenza Webpage

**[Tinyurl.com/SDCountyFlu](https://Tinyurl.com/SDCountyFlu)**

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## What to do:

- Keep your sick child at home until at least 24 hours after the fever is gone, except to get medical care.
- Children can go back to school 24 hours after their fever is gone **WITHOUT** the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages, Pedialyte®) to make sure their body has the fluids it needs.



## You can prevent spreading germs to other people in your home. Here's how:

- Keep your sick child in a separate room in the house as much as possible so they don't spread germs to healthy people in the house.
- People with flu can spread flu germs from 1 day before getting sick to up to 5 to 7 days after. Severely ill people or young children may be able to spread the flu longer, especially if they still have symptoms.
- Do not allow your child to share food or drinks with others.
- Ideally, just one person should care for the child while sick. This limits how many people are exposed to germs. It's also important to consider the caregiver's own health, and to avoid having someone at high risk take care of the child.



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