

IS THIS A COLD OR THE FLU?

The cold and flu season is fast approaching the Avonworth School District. Sometimes it is hard to tell at first if you should see a doctor. Colds and influenza are both respiratory or lung illnesses, but are caused by different viruses. There are too many cold and flu viruses to count! The flu shot this year protects against H1N1 and two other influenza strains. The flu shot does not protect against colds or other “stomach “viruses.

Viruses do NOT respond to antibiotics. Antibiotics should be saved for BACTERIAL infections so that they work when we need them. Unnecessary use of antibiotics may affect your body’s ability to fight off a bacterial infection usually treated with a common antibiotic. Stronger antibiotics may be required to treat common infections, and antibiotic resistant strains of certain bacteria can develop. MRSA is an example of this. Be sure to take all of your antibiotics. Failure to finish the prescription can result in re-infection or mutation of resistant strains of bacteria.

You should see your doctor if you develop a fever, worsen quickly, or fail to improve after 7-10 days of what you thought was a cold. An immediate fever with rapid onset of symptoms may be influenza. Some doctors prescribe anti-flu medications which shorten the duration of the flu symptoms. They are most effective if given within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms.

Remember---no fever---no flu---just a virus!

If you get a cold, the best treatment is rest, fluids, cough drops and medications for pain relief like Tylenol or Advil. “Cold” preparations often contain too many ingredients, and the younger child does not tolerate them well in school. Reserve them for nighttime use or not at all.

The chart below is a quick reference if you are not sure what type of illness that you or your child has.

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU
Fever	Rare	Present >102
Aches	Slight	Present
Chills	Rare	Present
Fatigue	Mild	Severe
Onset	Gradual	Sudden

Cough	Possible-- wet	Present-- dry
Sneezing	Common	Uncommon
Stuffy Nose	Common	Uncommon
Sore Throat	Common	Uncommon
Chest Discomfort	Mild or None	Mod---Severe
Headache	Mild or None	Mod---Severe

How to Stay Healthy and Avoid Colds and Flu

1. Wash hands often with soap and hot water or use hand sanitizer when this is not available.
2. Do not touch your nose or eyes when you are in a public place.
3. Stay home if you get sick or have a fever, or come to the nurse if you get sick at school.
Please call Mrs. Butterini, Mrs. Alterio or Mrs. Wible with any questions!

