











# WHAT IS INFLUENZA?



**Influenza** (*“the flu”*) is a virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu is more dangerous than the common cold for children and can cause severe illness and life-threatening complications. Children under 5, especially those younger than 2, often require medical care. Flu season can start in October and last until May.\*

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	COLD	INFLUENZA (FLU)
 <b>SYMPTOM ONSET</b>	<i>Gradual</i>	<i>Abrupt</i>
 <b>FEVER</b>	<i>Rare</i>	<i>Common; lasts 3-4 days</i>
 <b>ACHES</b>	<i>Rare</i>	<i>Common; often severe</i>
 <b>CHILLS</b>	<i>Rare</i>	<i>Usual</i>
 <b>FATIGUE, WEAKNESS</b>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Usual</i>
 <b>SNEEZING</b>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
 <b>CHEST DISCOMFORT, COUGH</b>	<i>Sometimes; hacking cough</i>	<i>Common; can be severe</i>
 <b>STUFFY NOSE</b>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
 <b>SORE THROAT</b>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
 <b>HEADACHES</b>	<i>Rare</i>	<i>Common</i>

**Occurrence of symptom:** *Usual* — *Common* — *Sometimes* — *Rare*

\*According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For additional helpful information about the dangers of the flu and how to protect your child, visit: [floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/respiratory-illness/influenza/index.html](https://floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/respiratory-illness/influenza/index.html)

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## For influenza, call or take your child to a doctor right away for:

- Fever above 104 degrees Fahrenheit that is not controlled by fever-reducing medicine
- In children younger than 12 weeks, any fever
- Difficulty breathing or fast breathing
- Bluish skin color (indicating lack of oxygen)
- Rash with fever
- Not drinking enough fluids (signs of dehydration)
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough



*Children younger than 5 years old, especially those younger than 2, and children with certain chronic health conditions are at higher risk for flu complications and should be seen by a healthcare provider as soon as possible.*

## When should my child stay home from child care?

The child should stay home until their temperature is normal without using fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours.



## To prevent the spread of germs:



Wash hands with soap and water.



Keep hands away from the face. Germs are often spread when a person touches something contaminated and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



Limit contact with people who show signs of illness.



Cover mouth/nose during coughs and sneezes. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

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