

## Health Room Information:

The Health Room staff wishes everyone a very happy, healthy and holy New Year.

The Flu and cold season is upon us. Here is some information from the University of Syracuse Health Services:

### The Common Cold vs. The Flu... What You Need To Know

**You wake up coughing, sneezing and congested and feel like you don't even have enough energy to get out of bed. You're sick!**

But how sick are you? While many people are able to quickly recognize that something is going through their system, many people are unable to differentiate between a common cold and influenza. The common cold and flu are different types of viral infections of the respiratory system. Because they share similar symptoms and feel the same, it can be hard to tell them apart.

Both cold and flu viruses spread from person to person. This means that getting either a cold or the flu may be prevented by washing your hands often and avoiding close contact with anyone with a cold or the flu. If you are infected with the cold or flu virus, get plenty of rest to help fight the infection. Drinking lots of fluids is also important to stay hydrated and loosen mucus.

**FACT: Antibiotics treat bacteria, not viruses. Since both the common cold and influenza are viral infections, antibiotics will not help.**

#### Influenza vs. Common Cold

This chart features some tips to help you differentiate between the symptoms of influenza and the common cold.

Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
Fever	Usually present up to 105	Rare
Aches	Usual, often severe	Slight
Chills	Fairly common	Uncommon
Tiredness	Moderate to severe	Mild
Symptom onset	Appear within 3 to 6 hours	Symptoms appear gradually
Coughing	Dry, unproductive cough	Hacking, productive cough
Sneezing	Uncommon	Common
Stuffy nose	Uncommon	Common
Sore throat	Uncommon	Common
Chest discomfort	Often severe	Mild to moderate
Headache	Common	Uncommon

Is your child coughing? If so, your child's body is doing its job. Coughing is a reflex that clears fluid from the throat and chest. It happens when the nerve endings in those airways get irritated. The sound of a cough is a giveaway if it is becoming serious. If your child makes wheezing sounds as they breathe, something could be blocking the airway. Pneumonia or asthma may also be to blame. Acute coughs can last up to 2-8 weeks.

**Please check with our doctor before giving your child any cough preparations. Here are some remedies you can try:**

- Keep your child hydrated: Postnasal drips that trickle down the back of the throat irritate it and cause sore throats and a cough. Drinking fluids helps to thin out the mucus in the postnasal drip. It also keeps the mucus membranes moist. Between the cold outside and the dry heat on the insides of our homes, the membranes dry out fast and coughs develop.
- If your child is old enough you can give them a menthol cough drop. Drinking warm tea with honey can also soothe the throat.
- Take a steamy shower and use a humidifier. Hot showers help loosen secretions in the nose and help ease coughs from colds, allergies and asthma. Humidifiers help by keeping in air “moist” so that nasal secretions don’t dry out and become uncomfortable. (This can also help if your child is prone to nose bleeds in the winter). Some humidifiers have reservoirs that need to be cleaned every 24 hours to avoid fungus and mold growth.
- Remove irritants from the air: perfumes, scented bathroom sprays, burning candles, smoke whether from a fireplace or cigarettes.
- And last but not least if these measures do not work, please contact your doctor for advice on using decongestants, cough suppressants and expectorants.

**Sore Throats:**

- Get plenty of rest and drink a lot of fluids
- Gargle with warm salt water ( 1 teaspoon of salt per 8oz. glass of water)
- Suck on throat lozenges or hard candy ( if age appropriate)
- Suck on frozen treats such as Popsicles
- Use a humidification process for the bedroom or whole house
- Sip chicken broth or warm tea with honey
- Inhale steam. Run very hot water in a sink. Drape a towel over the head to trap the steam, lean over the sink and breathe deeply through your mouth and nose for 5 to 10 minutes. Repeat several times in a day.
- Take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for the discomfort.

**Is your child too sick for school? Ask these questions.**

1. Does your child have a fever?
2. **Is your child well enough to participate in class? If they are too run down, tired, coughing (which also tires them), or have a fever, KEEP them home.**

**Prevention Strategies:**

- Always wash your hands before touching your mouth, nose, or eyes, and always wash right before eating.
- Don’t share items like cups, spoons, forks, straws, towels, pillows, or toothbrushes.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or in the crook of your arm when coughing or sneezing. If possible use tissues which can be discarded into a trash receptacle. Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer after blowing your nose.
- To boost your immunity eat right and be well-rested.
- **Look at hand washing as a survival skill.**

**Hand washing tips:**

- Wet hands and lather up with soap
- Scrub all surfaces for 15-20 seconds
- Rinse well and dry your hands
- No soap or water? Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wipes.

**What to disinfect and how:**

- The CDC recommends using chlorine bleach to disinfect. Add ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon of warm water and allow the mixture to sit on surfaces for 10 minutes before rinsing.
- Wear rubber gloves when you disinfect. Open a window if possible.
- Items you want to disinfect: Phones, stair railings, countertops, bathroom surfaces (toilet seats, handles, faucets), remote controls, microwave and refrigerator handles, door handles, light switches, toys.

**HERE IS TO A HEALTHY NEW YEAR!!**