

JUDY JACOBS PARKWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



300 Manetto Hill Road
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Mr. Gregory Scesney
Principal

Ms. Joanna Gentile
Assistant Principal

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Dear Judy Jacobs-Parkway Families,

Happy and Healthy New Year from the JJP Health Office! Flu season is upon us once again. In an effort to support the healthiest school environment, the following pages outline valuable information on influenza (the flu). Please take a look. Topics covered include signs and symptoms of the flu, emergency symptoms, how to tell flu from a cold, guidelines for returning students to school after illness. All the information is from the Centers for Disease Control and The New York State Department of Health and represents the best practice policies for a healthy educational environment while minimizing the spread of the flu and other common illnesses. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

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What is Influenza (also called Flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

Signs and Symptoms of Flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms that usually start suddenly, not gradually:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in young children than in adults.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS. PLEASE KEEP THEM HOME UNTIL THEY ARE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT MEDICATION OR CLEARED (IN WRITING) BY A DOCTOR TO RETURN TO SCHOOL.

**It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

How is the Flu spread? Person to Person

People with flu can spread it to others up to about 6 feet away. Most experts think that flu viruses are spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth or nose.

To avoid this, people should stay away from sick people and stay home if sick. It also is important to wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick should not be shared without washing thoroughly first. Eating utensils can be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap and do not need to be cleaned separately. Further, frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at home, work and school, especially if someone is ill.

The Flu Is Contagious

Most healthy adults may be able to infect other people beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days **after** becoming sick. Children may pass the virus for longer than 7 days. Symptoms start 1 to 4 days after the virus enters the body. **That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.** Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons may still spread the virus to others.

What are the emergency warning signs of flu sickness?

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In addition to the signs above, get medical help right away for any infant who has any of these signs:

- Being unable to eat
- Has trouble breathing
- Has no tears when crying
- Significantly fewer wet diapers than normal

Flu vs. Cold

Signs & Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
Symptom Onset	Abrupt	Gradual
Fever	Usual; lasts 3-4 days	Rare
Aches	Usual; often severe	Slight
Chills	Fairly common	Uncommon
Fatigue, weakness	Usual	Sometimes
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest discomfort, cough	Common; can be severe	Mild to moderate; hacking cough
Headache	Common	Rare

All above information can be found at the Centers for Disease Control website at the link below:
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is 5 years and older and does not have other health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

Children younger than 5 years of age – especially those younger than 2 years old – and children with certain chronic conditions, including asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system, are at high risk of serious flu-related complications. If your child is at high risk for flu complications, call your doctor or take them to the doctor right away if they develop flu symptoms.

What if my child seems very sick?

Even previously healthy children can get very sick from the flu.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is 5 years or older and does not have other health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed:

- ▶ Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- ▶ Bluish or gray skin color
- ▶ Not drinking enough fluids (not going to the bathroom or not making as much urine as they normally do)
- ▶ Severe or persistent vomiting
- ▶ Not waking up or not interacting
- ▶ Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held

- ▶ Flu symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- ▶ Has other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or asthma) and develops flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough.

Can my child go to school, day care or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid giving the flu to other children or caregivers.

When can my child go back to school after having the flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.



For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu or call 800-CDC-INFO



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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The Flu: A Guide for Parents

FLU INFORMATION

What is the flu?

Influenza (the flu) is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses. There are many different influenza viruses that are constantly changing. Flu viruses cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the United States each year.

The flu can be very dangerous for children.

Each year about 20,000 children younger than 5 years old are hospitalized from flu complications, like pneumonia.

How serious is the flu?

Flu illness can vary from mild to severe. While the flu can be serious even in people who are otherwise healthy, it can be especially dangerous for young children and children of any age who have certain long-term health conditions, including asthma (even mild or controlled), neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions, chronic lung disease, heart disease, blood disorders, endocrine disorders (such as diabetes), kidney, liver, and metabolic disorders, and weakened immune systems due to disease or medication. Children with these conditions and children who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy can have severe illness from the flu.

How does the flu spread?

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get the flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or nose.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with the flu will not have a fever.

How long can a sick person spread the flu to others?

People with the flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. However, children and people with weakened immune systems can infect others for longer periods of time, especially if they still have symptoms.

PROTECT YOUR CHILD

How can I protect my child against the flu?

To protect against the flu, the first and most important thing you can do is to get a flu vaccine for yourself and your child.

- ▶ Vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older.
- ▶ It's especially important that young children and children with long-term health conditions get vaccinated. (See list of conditions in "How serious is the flu?")
- ▶ Caregivers of children with health conditions or of children younger than 6 months old should get vaccinated. (Babies younger than 6 months are too young to be vaccinated themselves.)
- ▶ Another way to protect babies is to vaccinate pregnant women. Research shows that flu vaccination gives some protection to the baby both while the woman is pregnant and for several months after the baby is born.

Flu vaccine is updated annually to protect against the flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season. Flu vaccines are made using strict safety and production measures. Over the years, millions of flu vaccines have been given in the United States with a very good safety record.

Is there a medicine to treat the flu?

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat influenza illness. They can make people feel better and get better sooner. Antivirals can mean the difference between having milder illness instead of very serious illness that could result in a hospital stay. Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics, which fight against bacterial infections. They work best when started during the first 2 days

of illness. It's very important that antiviral drugs are used early to treat the flu in people who are very sick (for example, people who are in the hospital) or who are at high risk of serious flu complications. Other people with flu illness may also benefit from taking antiviral drugs. These drugs can be given to children and pregnant women.

What are some of the other ways I can protect my child against the flu?

In addition to getting vaccinated, you and your children can take everyday steps to help prevent the spread of germs:

These include the following:

- ▶ Stay away from people who are sick.
- ▶ If your child is sick with flu illness, try to keep him or her in a separate room from others in the household, if possible.
- ▶ CDC recommends that your sick child stay home for at least 24 hours after his or her fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- ▶ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after it has been used.
- ▶ Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- ▶ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way. ▶ Clean and disinfect hard surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs, including bathroom surfaces, kitchen counters and toys for children. Clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

These everyday steps are a good way to reduce your chances of getting sick. However, a yearly flu vaccine is the best protection against flu illness.

The flu is a serious and highly contagious disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the best way to protect yourself and your family is by ensuring that everyone 6 months of age and older gets an annual flu vaccination.

It's also important to be informed about the flu. Here are some facts to help you better understand this disease.

Did You Know?

- Flu spreads through tiny droplets made when a person talks, coughs or sneezes and may spread up to 6 feet away.
- Flu symptoms usually start suddenly and may include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and tiredness. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are also common symptoms in children.
- Sometimes a flu vaccine isn't well matched to that season's circulating strains of flu. If this happens, it's still important to get vaccinated because it still offers some protection against the circulating flu strains.
- Although the flu vaccine is never 100% effective, it is the best protection available against the flu.

Flu By the Numbers in the United States

Each year, between **5 and 20%** of the population develops the flu.

Children are **2 to 3 times** more likely than adults to catch the flu because of their less developed immune systems.

Every year, **approximately 20,000 children** under the age of five are hospitalized, and on average, 100 children die due to flu and its complications.

Children may miss up to **38 million days** of school during a bad flu season.

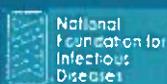
In addition to an annual flu vaccination, other ways to keep yourself and your family healthy during flu season are:

- **Wash hands often:** use soap and water or hand sanitizer to stop the spread of germs.
- **Stay home if you don't feel well:** keep germs from spreading to others.
- **Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze:** use a tissue or cough into your elbow.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth:** germs spread this way.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs:** this is particularly important when someone is sick.

**It's Not 'JUST' the Flu - It's a Serious Disease!
Get Your Flu Vaccine Today!**

www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org/school

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