

# Notes from Nurse Wendy

## Give Dat!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Blood Drive for Hynes first-grader, Amos! We greatly appreciate your contribution. We collected 42 units of blood!

## Know Your Symptoms

Cold and flu season is upon us. Please be mindful of the symptoms. Don't forget about strep throat, which is also contagious.

When should your child return to school? As with any illness, a student should be fever-free without medication for 24 hours. A child should also be kept at home if they are experience vomiting or diarrhea.

So how do you know whether you have a cold, a flu or something else? Here are explanations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Mayo Clinic:

## **COLD**

The common cold is a viral infection which typically runs its course within a week. While the worst symptoms appear 2 to 3 days after someone is infected, they remain contagious throughout their recovery. Precautions to not spread the virus should be taken the entire time.

A cold can be spread through the air or by coming in contact with a contaminated surface. For example, when someone infected coughs or sneezes, the virus can be inhaled by another person. Shared items, such as water fountains and door handles, are also ways a virus can be spread.

Frequent hand-washing and sanitizing wipes can greatly reduce the chances of spreading a cold, along with sneezing or coughing into the crook of your arm.

### **Typical cold symptoms include:**

- sneezing
- stuffy or runny nose
  - sore throat
  - cough
- low-grade fever (under 100.4 F)
  - headache

**When to see a doctor?** If a high fever (above 100.4) presents itself, or if any symptoms linger beyond a week, contact your family pediatrician.

## FLU

Influenza, or the flu for short, is a respiratory virus. Like a cold, it can be spread through the air or by coming in contact with a contaminated surface. The chief differences between a cold and the flu include a sudden fever, chills, body aches and the possibility of vomiting or diarrhea. A flu can last a week or longer, but most healthy children can fully recover within a week or two.

### Typical flu symptoms include:

- a fever with rapid onset (usually 101 F or higher)
  - fatigue
  - chills
  - headache
  - body aches
  - sore throat
- dry, hacking cough
- stuffy or runny nose

**When to see a doctor?** Medicines such as Tamiflu can ease the symptoms of the flu if given within the first couple of days of contracting the virus. Otherwise, ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for fever, extra rest and lots of fluids are the typical prescription for flu recovery. If your child has difficulty breathing, seek medical care immediately. Also, your child should see a doctor if they have an underlying medical condition, such as an immune system problem or heart or lung disease.

**Note:** You should NEVER give a child aspirin if they might have the flu, as it increases their risk of developing Reye syndrome.

## STREP THROAT

Strep throat is a bacterial infection, not a virus like the flu or a cold. It is not nearly as common as the cold, but it's very contagious and spread the same way – through the air or by touching an infected surface. If untreated, strep infections can cause more serious complications.

### Strep throat symptoms

- Sore throat, usually lasting beyond 48 hours
  - Swollen, tender lymph glands
- Tiny, red spots on the back or roof of the mouth
- Swollen, red tonsils; sometimes with white patches
  - Fever
  - Headache

- Rash
- Body aches
- Possible nausea or vomiting

**When to see a doctor?** Seek medical attention when a sore throat is accompanied by tender, swollen lymph glands (the easiest to find are in your neck and under your chin). Strep throat typically lasts longer than a sore throat that accompanies a cold, and a fever is also more likely. You should contact a doctor if your child has any problems breathing or swallowing.

Visit [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org) and your physician for more information.