

COLD OR FLU –WHAT TO DO?

It is cold and flu season and the Houston area is expecting a lot of flu into February and March. Sometimes it is hard to tell whether your child is coming down with a cold or the flu. Here are some guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Stuffy nose: common with colds; sometimes happens with flu
- Chest discomfort: mild to medium with colds; common with flu
- Headache: rare with colds; bad with flu
- Muscle aches: mild with colds; common and bad with flu
- Weak and tired: mild with colds; common and can last up to 3 weeks with flu
- Extreme Exhaustion: never with colds; happens early & is severe with flu

Children with certain health problems like asthma, cancer, or diabetes should start antiviral medication within 48 hours of flu symptoms. This helps them have a milder case of the flu. It is very important for these children to be checked out as soon as they get sick. Colds and flu are caused by viruses not bacteria. Antibiotics are not used to treat viruses. There is still time to get flu vaccine.

Remember to use acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever or muscle aches. Aspirin can cause a serious medical complication called Reye's Syndrome. Your child needs lots of rest and fluids like water or juice. If you need help deciding if your child has the flu, and they do not have a medical home, please visit your local Memorial Hermann School-Based Health Center. Services are always free of charge and Medicaid is now accepted.

*This article was prepared by Lisa Kimmey-Walker, MSN, RN. CPNP-PC
Ms. Kimmey-Walker is the nurse practitioner and manager of the
Memorial Hermann Health Centers for Schools – Lamar located at
1002 E. Stadium Drive (Lamar CHS campus).
281-762-8383 (Open Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)*