



**''Tis the season to be jolly"  
and not sick!**



Unfortunately, there are more sick people around than people who are jolly! It always happens around this time of year when doors are closed and windows are shut and twenty plus bodies occupy the same room. Germs are passed around so easily! Don't we wish that children would share their toys the way they share their germs!

I have some information from the Center for Disease Control (the CDC) about the flu that I would like to share with you.

**Five Fast Flu Facts:**

- Flu symptoms include fever, headache, chills, body aches, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, and nasal congestion. The signs and symptoms for both kinds of flu are similar. The symptoms last for a week or more.
- Flu is spread when a person who has the flu coughs, sneezes, or speaks and sends the flu virus into the air. The virus enters the nose, throat or lungs of a person and multiplies. Flu spreads less frequently when a person touches a surface that has the flu virus on it.
- If you get the flu, rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.
- Antibiotics like penicillin will not cure the flu (that is because it is a virus and antibiotics cannot kill a virus). The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot. Over-the-counter medications may relieve symptoms of flu. The National Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases recommends acetaminophen (Tylenol) for children, aspirin or acetaminophen for adults. Decongestants, cough suppressants, and use of a humidifier can provide symptomatic relief.
- In addition to flu shots (both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu), three antiviral medicines are available by prescription that will help prevent flu infection: Tamiflu, Flumadine and Symmetrel.

**Things to keep in mind for school-age children:**

- Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teenager who has the flu.
- Most antihistamines cause sleepiness. If a child still has a stuffy nose when she returns to school, parents may want to ask their child's doctor to prescribe a non-sedating antihistamine.
- Encourage children to cover coughs and sneezes, WASH HANDS FREQUENTLY, and keep hands away from eyes, nose and mouth.
- A sick child is advised to stay at home during the first days of illness when symptoms are most severe and the infection is most contagious. Children can return to school when symptoms are improving and no fever has been detected for 24 hours (without the use of medication such as Tylenol). Actually, the 24 hour rule also applies to vomiting and diarrhea.
- Getting enough sleep and eating a healthy diet will help strengthen the immune system.

**So, stay healthy and enjoy the holidays!**