

September 15, 2011

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Cold and flu season is just around the corner. I am writing to remind you of what you can do during this time to help keep your children healthy before they may need to see their doctor.

Prevention is often the KEY!

Take the following steps to help keep your kids healthy:

- Make sure they get plenty of sleep
- Feed your children healthy foods and give them plenty of water to drink
- Have them get enough exercise
- Encourage frequent hand washing
- Ask your pediatrician about getting a flu vaccination

What to do if you become sick?

Consider these remedies to treat symptoms if your child is under 4 years of age:

- Remember, over the counter medications are not recommended to treat congestion or cough. In addition, avoid any combination products (more than one ingredient)
- For stuffy nose, try a saline nasal spray or drops
- For muscle aches and fevers try either acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or, if your child is over 6 months of age, ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®). *Do not give aspirin to a child of any age!*
- For kids older than 1 year with dry cough, try ½ to 1 teaspoonful of honey
- Remember to consult your pediatrician or pharmacist before use of any medication

What about antibiotics?

We do not recommend using antibiotics for a cold or flu for the following reasons:

- Cold and flu infections are usually caused by viruses. Antibiotics do **NOT** kill viruses, so they will not help your child get better when they have a cold or flu
- Antibiotics can have many side effects: diarrhea, rash, and serious allergies
- Studies indicate that there is a greater chance of going to the emergency room due to a side effect of an antibiotic, than of preventing a serious complication from a cold or flu. Therefore, it is important to **discuss both the benefits and risks** of antibiotics with your pediatrician

Call your pediatrician if:

- Fever lasts over 3 days, or if under 12 weeks old, fever of any duration.
- Cough lasts for over 3 weeks
- Your child becomes worse
- Nasal discharge lasts for over 2 weeks
- An earache is confirmed, or suspected

We at Hill Physicians hope you have a healthy season.

Sincerely,



Thomas Long, M.D., Chief Medical Officer

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