



# SCHOOL HEALTH

October 2017 Newsletter

## Allergies VS. Colds

With autumn comes runny noses, coughs, and red, itchy eyes. Seasonal allergies and the common cold can be so much alike that it's sometimes hard to tell the two apart, but if you look closely you can find clues about what's going on- see *the chart to the right*.

Another sign that you might be dealing with seasonal allergies is if symptoms come on suddenly and last a long time. Cold symptoms tend to come on more gradually and usually go away within 7 to 10 days, but allergies last as long as someone is exposed to an allergen, which can be for weeks or months.

## How to Help

Whether it's a cold or allergies, your child can feel pretty miserable making it hard for them to focus on school work.

- **Get them to bed on time- or early!** Plenty of rest is the best thing to help start their day out on the right foot.
- **Drink lots of water-** Drinking plenty of water will help with head congestion, sore throats, and stomach complaints. **Send a clear water bottle to school to make sure they continue drinking throughout the day.**
- **Consider a Humidifier-** With autumn upon us the air is getting cooler and dry indoor air is often the cause of chapped lips, dry skin and irritated sinus passages. The moisture from a cool mist humidifier can soothe dry sinus passages. However, if you have indoor allergies, dust and mold from the humidifier may cause more harm than good if not cleaned and taken care of properly.
- **Talk to your doctor-** whether it's a cold or allergies, it's always best to consult your doctor before giving medications- even over the counter ones. Your doctor can also help you determine what other things you can do at home to help (such as saline nose drops).

Symptom check: Is it a cold or allergy?		
Symptom	Cold	Allergy
Cough	Usually	Sometimes
General aches and pains	Sometimes	Never
Fatigue and weakness	Sometimes	Sometimes
Itchy eyes	Rarely	Usually
Sneezing	Usually	Usually
Sore throat	Usually	Rarely
Runny nose	Usually	Usually
Stuffy nose	Usually	Usually
Fever	Rarely	Never

Based on National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, 2014



## \*\*Reminders:

- **Cough drops are considered a medication and required a signed note or consent form on file.** This prevents your child from any miscommunication with staff about having “candy” in class and helps to promote the safety of other students.

- **Health Services does not keep cough drops on hand.** Please send a small bag of cough drops that can be kept in the Health Services office and given out as your child needs them.

- **Get your flu shot!** An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk of getting sick with seasonal flu and spreading it to others. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through that community. For more information regarding the flu vaccine go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>

## Dealing With Absences

Your child has been out sick, you’ve already let the school know, you’ve just left the doctor’s office, now what? It can seem like the last thing on your mind, but **following up with the school health office regarding your child’s diagnosis is important for a few reasons.**

- Knowing what illnesses are going around and in which grades **help us determine how to respond quicker and cut down on illnesses spreading** among students.
- **Tracking information allows us to keep parents informed.** This also gives doctors vital information about exposures- which can cut down on unnecessary tests and medical costs.
- Knowing about illnesses helps us to get information to the right people fast! **Certain illnesses can be dangerous for students with weak immune systems and staff who are pregnant or have health concerns.** Having this information can help their doctor identify any immediate needs and take precautionary measures.

*\*Remember, your child’s health information is confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only. You can simply call in and speak with our front desk staff OR you can feel free to speak our **Health Services** staff at **320-230-5340 ext. 6945.***

## Sore Throats

There are many causes for a sore throat including:

- Allergies
- Dry air
- Air irritants
- Muscle strain
- Bacterial infections such as Strep
- Viral illnesses such as the common cold, measles, croup, or mono.

**Get emergency medical care if** your child has a sore throat and also:

- Has difficulty breathing
- Is drooling or has difficulty swallowing
- Cannot tolerate liquids

See your doctor as soon as possible if your child’s sore throat lasts longer than one week OR is accompanied by:

- Fever
- Red, swollen tonsils
- White patches or pus on the back of the throat
- Swollen lymph nodes in the neck
- Blood in saliva or phlegm
- Skin rash
- Hoarse voice
- Signs of dehydration, such as no wet diapers or urine production in eight hours, dry skin, dry mouth, or crying without tears