

# Flu Symptoms: When to Bring Your Child to the Emergency Center

**We are in the midst of one of the most severe flu seasons in a decade. Wolfson Children's Hospital and hospitals throughout the US have seen a jump in flu-related emergency center visits over the past several weeks.**

It's important for parents to understand when they should or shouldn't bring a child into an emergency center with flu-like symptoms.

Flu symptoms can range from mild to severe. Symptoms of the flu can include: high fever, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, diarrhea, and vomiting. A child with mild flu-like symptoms usually can be cared for at home with fever-reducing medication (like Tylenol® and/or Ibuprofen (if your child is more than 6 months old), clear fluids and bed rest. If diagnosed early enough, some children may benefit from Tamiflu®, a medication which can be prescribed by your pediatrician. To ensure that your child has fully recovered from the flu, he/she should stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone.

Most healthy people — including children — can recover from the flu without problems and **don't need to go to the emergency center or be hospitalized.**

If your child has worsening or severe flu-like symptoms or is at high risk of flu complications (children who have chronic illnesses such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, sickle cell disease, cancer and/or are younger than 2 years old), call your child's physician for advice on treatment.

**You should seek immediate medical attention if you or your child exhibits any of the emergency warning signs listed below:**

- severe headache or neck stiffness
- fast breathing or trouble breathing
- bluish skin color
- not drinking enough fluids
- not waking up or not interacting
- being so irritable that the child does not want to be held



In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- sudden dizziness
- confusion
- severe or persistent vomiting

## **Remember:**

**Although most flu-like illnesses can be treated at home, if you are especially concerned about your child's illness or your child exhibits any of the emergency warning signs, please seek immediate medical care!**

As always, vaccination is the best way to prevent the flu in your children and your entire family and it is not too late to get vaccinated. Go to your family doctor for a vaccination or to find the locations nearest to you with flu vaccines, use the [Flu Vaccine Finder](https://vaccinefinder.org) (<https://vaccinefinder.org>).

