

## So your kid has a virus!

Respiratory and gastrointestinal (GI) viruses are going around like crazy right now! If you are receiving this sheet, you've probably been told that your child has a viral infection that will take a few more days to settle. **The most important thing to know is that viral infections do not need antibiotics - they won't work!** Believe it or not most preschool/school aged children have up to 12 colds a year, and they tend to cluster together during the spring and fall. Here are a few things you can do to help your child during these times:

### FEVER

- Fevers are okay! It is a sign of your body fighting the infection
- Please do give ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) to treat the fever - it is safe, and fevers make kids feel crummy
- We recommend alternating Advil and Tylenol every 3 hours with weight-based appropriate doses for your child (these will be higher than what's on the box). Your child's weight is \_\_\_\_\_ kg and these are the doses we recommend for them:
  - Ibuprofen dose: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Acetaminophen dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- A good sample schedule would be:
  - 6AM: ibuprofen dose, 9AM: acetaminophen dose, 12PM: ibuprofen dose, 3PM: acetaminophen dose, and so on and so forth
- You can stretch this out a bit to every 4-6 hours if your child is not spiking as quickly

### NASAL CONGESTION

- Consider getting a humidifier for your child's room
- Nasal saline spray (Hydrasense, Neil-Med, Salinex, etc are some common brands) as often as you need throughout the day
- Snot sucker for young babies and toddlers who can't blow! Sounds gross, but it works! FridaMom makes a great one, but there are many brands out there.

### COUGH

- Many young kids under age 5 can't have conventional cough syrups
- Honey has been shown in many studies to be just as effective! And it's usually an easier sell to most kids. Try 1 tbsp before bed or as needed throughout the day (avoid honey in babies under 1 year of age). For older kids, hot water with honey & lemon is a good option to try too!
- Know that coughs can last a week or two after an infection - in the absence of an ongoing fever, this is normal, common, and not harmful to your child

### VOMITING & DIARRHEA

- Ask your pharmacist for some Pedialyte freezies or popsicles - these are usually kept behind the counter and will help replace your child's electrolytes if they are losing a lot of fluid through diarrhea or vomiting
- Small sips of fluid: water, diluted apple juice, or Pedialyte are great options
- Small snacks/meals: dry crackers, toast, cereal, etc are usually safe bets
- Avoid milk-containing products for 5-7 days during a gastrointestinal illness and gradually reintroduce once they're on the mend

**What *could* be abnormal - if any of these, call your FAMILY DOCTOR'S OFFICE:**

- Persistent, unremitting fevers lasting over 5 days
- Barking cough that sounds like a seal (youtube "croup cough")
- Persistent complaints of ear pain or tugging at their ears and crying in the setting of a fever
- Sore throat and fever **without** cough, runny nose or vomiting/diarrhea (this can sometimes represent strep throat and may warrant testing). If symptoms other than sore throat are also present, it is very unlikely to be strep.
- They have coughs that last 4-6 weeks after each viral infection they get: this can sometimes be an early sign of asthma

**What *is* abnormal - if any of these, take your child to the EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT:**

- Your child is working hard to breathe: audible wheeze, their rib muscles are pulling in when they are breathing, they are breathing hard and fast for a prolonged period of time (i.e. 5+ minutes), grunting in children <1 year old.
- Your child isn't peeing enough:
  - For infants < 2 years: less than wet 2 diapers in 24h
  - For older kids > 2 years: less than 2 pees in 24h
- Your child has a sore throat and fever, and the sore throat is changing the way their voice sounds or making it hard for them to swallow even their own saliva
- Your child is difficult to wake up or keep awake even to eat or drink, (and this does not improve with anti-fever medications)
- Abdominal pain with blood in their stools