

## **'Flu season is coming; make sure your child is protected, and prepared**

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Influenza (flu) is a disease caused by a virus, and is responsible for large outbreaks of the flu every few years. The flu differs from the common cold in that it has the added symptoms of high fever, headaches, and extreme exhaustion in many cases. Approximately 10-20% of the population gets the flu each year, with peak flu season being late December through March.

The flu is contagious and because it's caused by a virus, antibiotics will not help. Those who get the flu mostly count on their immune systems for recovery, while taking Tylenol or Advil (not aspirin) for symptom relief.

You can attempt to PREVENT the flu by getting the flu shot. It is especially recommended for college students as the typical college settings (e.g., residence halls, study spaces, and dining halls) are areas where it can spread easily. It is even more important that those who have asthma/respiratory illness, chronic diseases, or diabetes get the flu vaccine for added protection.

If your child has not gotten the flu shot yet, encourage him or her to talk with your doctor about getting one while they are home over break. If a friend displays symptoms of the flu, tell your child to take precautions: cover your cough, wash your hands, drink plenty of water, and consider the flu shot.

If your child gets the flu, remind them they need to stay away from others, whether at home or in the residence hall, to avoid infecting others with the virus.