

# I Feel Sick!

## Infectious Diseases:

Frequent illnesses are the rule,  
not the exception for most children.

It is the job of toddlers and young children to catch minor illnesses and make immunity to them. Toddlers may spend most of the year with a runny nose or cough. Older children will have between six and nine viral illnesses each year on average.

### Is it a virus or bacteria?

- ◆ In general, it's only for bacterial infections that doctors have more effective remedies than those at home.
  - ◆ Viral illnesses don't respond to antibiotics, but sometimes you can make your child more comfortable with over the counter medicines. Check with a doctor or pharmacist.
  - ◆ Always follow the directions on the medicine bottle carefully.
  - ◆ Always complete a course of medicine.
- The most common reason for a medicine to fail clearing up a problem is that the course of medicine was not completed .

### Common viral infections include:

- ◆ Colds: often a combination of runny nose, sore throat, stuffy ears, hoarseness, fever.
- ◆ Flu: same as cold plus, high fever; headaches; muscle aches and pains.
- ◆ Viral gastroenteritis (stomach flu): nausea, vomiting , diarrhea and abdominal pain.

Viral infections usually last from several days to a week.

### Common bacterial infections include:

- ◆ Strep throat: sore throat most of the time; fever, swollen lymph glands in the neck; headaches; abdominal pain.
- ◆ Ear or sinus infection: These will sometimes result from colds that don't clear up quickly.

Bacterial infections rarely include runny noses and aching muscles, but often feature

headaches and fever.

### WHAT TO DO...

- Colds and flu:** All children have colds from time to time. Colds are usually most contagious a day or two before symptoms develop.
- ◆ Keep her at home only if the symptoms, like a sore throat, tiredness, or cough, are likely to interfere with school work.
  - ◆ Give her plenty of fluids. Encourage her to rest, but don't make her stay in bed.

- Sore throat/Strep throat:** It's sometimes hard to tell the difference between a viral sore throat and strep, so it's advisable to ask for a throat swab or culture at your doctor's office. Strep is highly infectious, so siblings should be tested too.
- ◆ Acetaminophen is as effective as antibiotics in reducing discomfort from a sore throat.
  - ◆ Give him plenty of fluids for any throat soreness. Cold foods and liquids like jello, ice cream, popsicles, and fruit juice help ease sore throat pain and ensure he has some nourishment even if he's not feeling very hungry.

For information about your child care needs,  
please call Child Care Resource  
at (802) 863-3367.