



## *Upcoming Cold and Flu Season*

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As we quickly approach the transition between the end of summer and the beginning of fall, our soccer kids are "at-risk" to catch Upper Respiratory Infections (URI), Influenza Flu and the new scare, the Swine Flu (NIHI). Increased stress due to school/homework, tougher practices/games, and a change in weather temperature, make our kids, more susceptible to these viruses as their immune systems begin to run down. How can we help prevent these, what signs/symptoms should we look for, and how do we treat them is very basic information that all of us as parents, coaches, athletes, and soccer trainers should know.

1. All of these illnesses are viral infections and normally are transmitted from one person to another by:
  - Coughing, Sneezing, Sharing Water Bottles, Kissing, Etc.
2. Proper hand washing for at least 15-30 seconds w/ hot, soapy water many times during the day helps prevent the transmission of these infections. Other ways to prevent the transmission is:
  - coughing/sneezing into one's elbow or armpit instead of your hand/fist or not covering your mouth at all.

- Do not share water bottles, towels or other personal hygiene products.
- Clean all athletic gear and workout equipment daily.

3. Common signs/symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny/Stuffiness Nose
- Body Aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue

4. Most of these infections are self-limiting within 7 - 10 days after contacting the viral infection. The best course of action is "supportive therapy" including:

- Antihistamines, decongestants, nasal spray
- Throat sprays or lozenges
- Lots of Fluid, Rest and Time Away From Other People

5. When do you see the Doctor

- What do they look like? Not getting any better w/ rest.
- Fever >100.4F
- Chills or Sweats
- Pulse >100
- Weight Loss of 3-5 pounds (great indicator of dehydration)
- History of Asthma and Bronchitis

6. And the best General Rule is "Above the Neck"



### "OKAY TO PLAY"

- However, still keep your sick player away from the rest of the team to avoid close-contact and utilize skill training and workouts at 50% intensity until healthy.

### 7. "Below the Neck" - DO NOT PLAY

- Fever above 100.4F, don't play until fever is gone
- Any symptoms in your ears, swollen lymph nodes in your neck, or a very red, hard to swallow throat, don't play
- And, at anytime a cold/flu settles in your lungs, don't play

The cold/flu season usually runs from mid-September to mid-March which is a long time and bad enough for all of us. But, with the Swine Flu lurking, it will be worse this year. The average age to be hit the most is 18 (10 - 25 range). Predictions are for at least (25 - 40%) of this age population to be sick this cold/flu season versus (8%) on a regular year. This year, you may want to consider:

- Vaccinate for Normal Influenza Flu or N1H1 when available.
- Keep your kid from going to school if you suspect they are getting sick. Schools are anticipating this attendance problem.
- Keep your kid extra hydrated at all times and demand that they get extra rest and eat healthy.
- If your kid doesn't improve in 2-3 days, see a Doctor for an accurate diagnosis.

Here's to your health and a successful soccer season!