

# Influenza

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**Sarah Bleier, APNP, FNP-C**  
Prevea Nurse Practitioner  
(844)616-3556  
Online scheduling  
available at:  
[www.prevea.com/NJSD](http://www.prevea.com/NJSD)

## *Neenah Joint School District Health & Wellness Center*

Mon. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Tues. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Wed. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Thurs. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Fri. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Flu season seems to be rearing its ugly head in our area, so this is a good time for a refresher. When we say influenza, we are referring to a viral illness causing respiratory flu. For most people, flu will manifest as fever, feverish symptoms (body aches, chills, and sweats), headache, cough, sore throat, and fatigue. While some adults may also have diarrhea and an upset stomach, these symptoms are much more common in children with influenza.

Influenza is typically a self-limiting illness, which means it runs its course without specific intervention from a healthcare provider. While symptoms range anywhere from mild to severe in nature, they will usually resolve 5-7 days from the onset of illness. The exceptions are cough and fatigue, which may remain bothersome for another week or so after other symptoms have resolved.

For most people with influenza, staying home to rest (and to keep from infecting others) is the main recommendation. Over the counter medicines such as tylenol/acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen can be taken per package directions to help with the fever, aches, and headache. Cough and cold medicines can also be helpful based on what symptoms are present but should be used with caution to avoid taking in too much tylenol, which is contained in many over the counter medications.

People with influenza should stay home from work and/or school until they have been free from fever and feverish symptoms for 24 hours and are feeling well enough to attend. As mentioned, you may continue to feel fatigued at that time, and this may cause you to need to rest at home at the end of the first few days back at work. In addition, the cough may linger on a similar timeline.

If you have influenza-like symptoms and have an underlying condition that predisposes you to severe illness (serious heart or lung disease such as asthma, or immunocompromising conditions), evaluation by a healthcare provider is likely to be of benefit. In some cases, influenza testing will be needed. If you have influenza and have other conditions that can make progression to severe illness more likely, they may offer a prescription for an antiviral medication called Tamiflu.

This medication can shorten the duration of symptoms by about 12-24 hours but can also lower the risk of progressing to severe illness that may necessitate hospitalization. Tamiflu is not usually recommended for those who do not have conditions making influenza higher risk. It can cause an upset stomach, and this is the main reason for discontinuing the medication prior to finishing treatment.