



Grandparents Corner

November 2011

Children and Flu

The number one way to prevent flu is to have an annual influenza vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that all children ages six months to 18 years receive the flu vaccine to prevent influenza.

The flu is caused by one of three types of influenza viruses. Types A and B are responsible for the yearly flu epidemics, while the Type C virus causes sporadic illness.

Flu symptoms are highly contagious. Children share close quarters in school classrooms. The flu is spread when a child either inhales infected droplets in the air (coughed up or sneezed by an infected person), or when the child comes in direct contact with an infected person. This can happen when they share pencils at school or play computer games, as well as when they share remotes or utensils such as spoons and forks.

The symptoms of flu in children are more severe than symptoms of a childhood cold. Symptoms of flu in children start abruptly and usually cause kids to feel the worse during the first two or three days of onset. Flu symptoms may include:

- A high-grade fever
- Chills and shakes with the fever
- Extreme tiredness
- Headache and body aches
- Dry, hacking cough
- Sore throat
- Vomiting and belly pain.

Hand washing is the number one prevention against spreading germs. Hand washing may seem like a simple task that is common sense, but there is a proper way to wash hands to ensure that germs are killed. Below demonstrates the proper technique:

1. Turn on water faucet and adjust water temperature until it is warm.
2. Pump or pour soap into wet hands and work into a rich, foamy lather by rubbing hands back and forth while adding a little bit of water, as necessary.
3. Turn off the water faucet to conserve water while washing hands.
4. Massage soap over hands for 20-30 seconds, making sure to wash the palms, backs of hands, fingers and nail area. A good way to ensure that you are washing hands for the recommended time is to sing the "Happy Birthday" song.
5. Turn the water faucet back on to a warm temperature and rinse hands thoroughly to ensure that all soap is removed.
6. Grab a clean cloth or paper towel and dry hands thoroughly. Use the same paper towel or cloth to turn off the faucet.

Keeping hoarding under control can be a challenge for caregivers. When cleaning out clutter, work at the person's pace. Some people cannot tolerate even a half hour of clearing in the beginning. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. If you think of difficult behaviors as a way for the person with Alzheimer's disease to communicate what they need or feel, or what is upsetting them, you'll be better able to respond calmly. T F
2. People with dementia sometimes hoard to "keep things safe." T F
3. Changes to the home environment will not make the person with dementia become anxious. T F
4. Some people with dementia may keep belongings, including clothing, out in the open in order to know where they are. T F
5. Frail adults hold onto furniture while moving through the home, so it is important that these supports are stable. T F
6. If a person with dementia has screaming fits, the reason could not be physical. T F
7. Although people with dementia quickly forget a visit, they may remember the emotions the visit created. T F
8. Memory loss and confusion may cause a person with Alzheimer's disease to perceive things in new or unusual ways. T F
9. Try to convince the person with Alzheimer's disease with lengthy explanations. T F
10. When clearing out clutter, check for safety first, especially fire and fall hazards. T F

KEY: 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. T 9. F 10. T