



The Ashe Street Clinic
Tralee
Co Kerry

Tel: 066 712 5611
Fax: 066 712 2626

Web: www.theashestreetclinic.com
Email: reception@theashestreetclinic.com

Influenza (Flu)

You or your child has been diagnosed with “the flu”. The typical symptoms are a high fever, runny nose, chesty cough, aches and pains and sometimes vomiting. In the majority of people it is an uncomfortable but harmless condition that will settle within 5 to 7 days.

Antibiotics will **not** help with the flu and can sometimes make things worse by causing stomach upset and diarrhoea. Occasionally a person might develop a complication of the flu such as an ear infection or bronchitis that might require an antibiotic but these complications usually only begin five to seven days after the flu symptoms beginning.

The best treatment for the flu is to control the temperature with Calpol or Nurofen (see below re dosing). It is important to keep the patient well hydrated by giving plenty of isotonic fluids as outlined below. Cough bottles usually do not work in children and antibiotics are **not** helpful in uncomplicated cases. Keep the patient at home until the symptoms settle (usually 5 to 7 days).

You can safely treat the flu at home using the above measures. However you should make an appointment to see one of the Doctors in The Ashe Street Clinic if you or your child has one of the following problems:

- * Symptoms lasting longer than 7 days.
- * Persisting vomiting and not keeping down isotonic fluids.
- * Rash.
- * Headache not responding to Calpol, Paracetamol or Nurofen.
- * An ear ache.
- * Breathlessness, confusion or drowsiness.

People whose **immune system is depressed** may need **anti viral medication** and if any of these people develop flu symptoms they should contact The Ashe Street Clinic as soon as they start to develop symptoms (i.e. within the 1st 24 hours of getting the flu) These people should also have the flu vaccine every autumn.

These high risk people include those with the following:

- * Pregnant women+ women who have had a baby in the last 6 weeks.
- * Diabetes and people with bad asthma requiring oral or inhaled steroids.
- * Chronic heart, liver, lung or kidney disease.
- * AIDS or HIV positive.
- * Those on chemotherapy for cancer, etc.
- * Children less than 2 years and adults over the age of 65 years.
- * People with leukaemia.
- * Severely obese people (BMI>40).
- * People in nursing homes and residential care centres.

Please remember to “**Catch it , bin it and kill it**“ when you cough or sneeze . Use a tissue or your hands to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze to prevent the flu bug from spreading to others .Then bin the tissue and wash your hands as soon as possible .

Temperature Control

If your child has a high temperature, you can treat it with paracetamol (Calpol, Panadol, Paralink) or ibuprofen (Nurofen, Brufen).

Paracetamol should be given at the maximum dose for the age or weight of the child as outlined on the bottle. Paracetamol can be given orally or by rectal suppositories if the child is vomiting (Paralink suppositories). Paracetamol can be given every four hours but a maximum of four doses only can be given in any one twenty-four hour period.

Ibuprofen (Nurofen, Brufen) can be given orally every six hours, up to a maximum of three doses in twenty-four hours. Ibuprofen should be avoided if the child has asthma, allergies or an upset stomach.

Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be alternated every four hours if necessary, i.e. give Paracetamol at 9am, Ibuprofen at 12midday, Paracetamol at 4pm etc.

If the child's fever does not settle with Paracetamol or ibuprofen, or if your child has vomiting, a rash or is very lethargic with a fever, you should seek medical advice immediately

ORAL RE-HYDRATION IN CHILDREN

If your child has an upset stomach, vomiting or diarrhoea it is best to give them small quantities of isotonic fluids regularly. The following are good options:

- “Dioralyte sachets” (natural, citrus or blackcurrant flavour). The powder is mixed with 200ml (7 fluid ozs) of boiled cooled water.
- Isotonic sports drinks such as “Lucozade sport”.

Do not give water, milk or 7Up to children with upset stomachs.

If the child shows signs of dehydration such as dry mouth, dry nappies or very lethargic you should seek medical advice.

With oral re-hydration, you should attempt to give one to one and a half times the usual feed volume for children up to two years of age.

For children two years to twelve years of age, give 200mls (7fluid ozs) after each loose bowel motion or after vomiting. The re-hydration fluid should be given slowly by sips over two to four hours.