



November 28, 2022

Dear Parent or Caregiver:

On November 22, Dr. Brent Roussin, Manitoba's Chief Public Health Officer, and Dr. Elisabete Doyle, head of pediatric medicine at HSC's Children's Hospital, held a town hall to talk about the high number of RSV and influenza A among children.

We are providing some excerpts from the town hall below to help you be informed and give you support if your child is experiencing illness this winter.

How can I protect my child this flu season?

Dr. Roussin: There are multiple layers that we can take to protect ourselves. You can make sure vaccines are up to date, stay home when ill, wash your hands, proper cough hygiene (cough or sneeze into your elbow), and you can wear a mask in indoor public places.

When should my child be vaccinated?

Dr. Roussin: People should get vaccinated (for COVID 19 or Influenza) as soon as possible and, if they are sick, wait to recover and then talk to your health-care provider about the best course of action.

When should my child stay home from school or daycare?

Dr. Roussin: As soon as symptoms develop, children should be staying home. If it's a respiratory virus that we have no diagnosis for, then children should stay home until they are improving, which means no fever, and other symptoms clearly improving for a couple of days.

Specifically for COVID, people should wait for at least five days after testing positive or the onset of symptoms before returning to school or daycare.

When should I take my child to the hospital?

Dr. Doyle: Anytime you see your child having difficulty breathing, so that may mean your child's nostrils are flaring, they may be sucking in between their ribs, they may be engaging their tummy muscles. If their colour is poor, if they're having pauses in breathing, especially with young infants, that's a reason to go to the emergency department.

In addition, if your child isn't drinking enough, if they are sleepy and won't wake up and if an infant less than three months old has a fever, those are also reasons to go to the ER.

My child has a high fever, what should I do?

Dr. Doyle: There are many ways to manage a fever, such as giving them fluids and running a fan to cool down the child. Unless the child is an infant under three months, a high fever shouldn't be a reason to go to the ER.

It may be difficult to find children's medication for fever due to the supply chain issues. Parents can take their adult medication like Tylenol and ibuprofen to a pharmacist and they can properly divide it up into the right dose for children.

If you have questions about your child's health you can find more information on the Sharedhealth website: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/patient-care/where-to-go/children-and-teens/> or you can call Health Links at 204-788-8200.

We hope you have found this information to be helpful and wish you and your family the best of health this winter season.