



Family, Friends, Fun, Flu – Which of these Words Doesn't Belong?

As a parent, you have a good idea of the things that belong in your child's life, and it's a safe bet that flu isn't one of them. Sadly, many children don't get the protection they could from the flu.

But flu takes a big toll on children. About 100 children die from the flu each year in the United States, while 20,000 children younger than 5 are hospitalized from the flu. And during a bad flu season, as many as 1 in 5 kids may have to go to the doctor, visit the ER or other urgent care center for treatment from the flu.

The good news is that a few simple steps can go a long way toward keeping flu out of your child's life.

First, get yourself and your loved ones vaccinated. There's plenty of flu vaccine this year. The flu vaccine protects against three flu viruses and can also cross-protect against other flu viruses too.

Second, everyday actions can help stop the spread of germs. Encourage your kids to cover their coughs or sneezes and wash their hands often. Also, keep your kids home from school when they are sick, and avoid having them in close contact with sick people who could spread germs to them.

You should also be on the look-out for flu-like symptoms, including a high fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches.

And if you or your child get sick with flu-like symptoms, keep in mind that there are prescription drugs to treat the flu called "antivirals." Antiviral drugs can reduce symptoms and shorten the time of illness and they can prevent serious flu complications too. But antivirals should be started within 48 hours of getting sick and must be prescribed by a health care provider.

So take steps to keep the flu out of your child's life, because some experiences in life – like flu – are better avoided.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu,
or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6358 (TTY).