

# COLD & FLU

Contributing to millions of sick days per year in adults and children, colds and the flu have an enormous impact on family life, healthcare systems and society around the world. With children more at risk of picking up an infection than adults, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to infection and how implementing good hygiene can help to break the chain of infection.

## KEY FACTS

INFLUENZA HAS A 30% ANNUAL INFECTION RATE IN CHILDREN<sup>3</sup>



59 MILLION SCHOOL DAYS LOST EACH YEAR IN THE USA DUE TO COLD AND FLU<sup>1</sup>

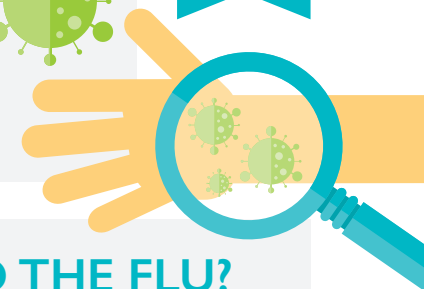
THE FLU VIRUS CAN SURVIVE ON SURFACES FOR UP TO 48 HOURS<sup>2</sup>

## SYMPTOMS

Cold and flu viruses are highly contagious viral infections of the respiratory tract (nose, throat, airways and occasionally lungs). There are over 200 different cold and flu viruses.<sup>4,5,6</sup> A person becomes infectious 1-2 days before the symptoms become evident. The main symptoms of a cold consist of a blocked or runny nose, sore throat, sneezing and a cough. The main symptoms of the flu include an achy body, high temperature, headaches and fatigue. In children flu symptoms may also include sickness and diarrhoea.

## HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Cold and flu viruses spread most easily among groups of people in constant close contact, such as families and children in school or day care facilities. Research has shown that people's hands, as well as commonly touched surfaces, such as door handles, toys and kitchen surfaces are key sources for cold viruses.<sup>7,8</sup> Studies have found that the virus that causes the common cold is able to survive for several hours on people's hands and for up to 24 hours on hard surfaces, while the flu virus can survive for up to 48 hours on hard surfaces.<sup>2</sup>



FACT SHEET

## HOW CAN I HELP TO AVOID COLDS AND THE FLU?

Implementation of good family hygiene practices can help to prevent the spread of cold viruses

### PROTECT

- > Practice good health habits—such as keeping physically active, drinking plenty of fluids and eating nutritious food.
- > Practice good hygiene habits—wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser after caring for someone with cold or flu.

### PREVENT

- > Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- > If you are out and about and don't have access to soap and water use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- > Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with hands.
- > Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your home. Children can touch surfaces up to 300 times in 30 minutes<sup>9</sup>, heightening their risk of infection.

### CONTAIN

- > Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose and throw the tissue in a bin. Always wash your hands afterwards.
- > Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or the crook of the arm—not your hands—if you don't have any tissues.
- > Don't share cutlery, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items.
- > Stay at home if you or your child are sick.