

Fighting The Flu

By Shaleek Wilson



Dr. Antonio C. Arrieta
CHOC Infectious Disease
Specialist

Dr. Arrieta has worked at CHOC Children's since 1991. He is the director of pediatric infectious diseases and director of infectious disease clinical research, and specializes in the treatment of serious community acquired and nosocomial infections. Dr. Arrieta completed his fellowship at UCI-Memorial/Miller Children's Hospital in Long Beach and his pediatrics residency at Southern Illinois University.

Dr. Arrieta's philosophy of care: "My most important message for the community is prevention mainly through timely immunization, and also by observing healthy habits and hand-washing."

EDUCATION:

Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia in Lima, Peru

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:

Pediatric Infectious Diseases

PROPER ID

How do you distinguish a common cold from the flu (influenza)? When late fall rolls around, the flu usually rolls in with it. "The first few days with a cough, fever and sore throat are early signs of influenza," says Dr. Arrieta. "Fever is very common. Probably 90 percent of children who have influenza will have a (high) fever." What else should you look out for to identify this seasonal respiratory infection?

- » Body aches
- » Chills
- » Headache
- » Runny or stuffy nose

"V" FOR VICTORY

It's possible for your child to be on the winning team this flu season. "The best way to fight influenza is not to get it. All children older than 6 months and adults should receive the flu vaccine. It is safe and highly effective," says Dr. Arrieta. What else could you do? Suggestions from Dr.



Arrieta include washing one's hands very carefully before and after taking care of young children, and avoiding close contact for long periods of time with people who have influenza or a respiratory illness.

SHOO'ING THE FLU

"The only effective treatment that will shorten the course of the illness is anti-viral agents," says Dr. Arrieta. The most familiar one is Tamiflu. It's safe for children one year and older, but if necessary, is used in younger children. Alternatively, parents can administer over-the-counter remedies like acetaminophen for fever or discomfort, says Dr. Arrieta. One thing Dr. Arrieta does NOT recommend: decongestants. "They can make children drowsy and limit the parent's ability to evaluate them if they're not feeling well."

SHOT TREATMENT

The flu shot is safe and up to 70 percent protective. Also safe and effective is the intranasal form of the vaccine, which shouldn't be given to children less than two years of age and with asthma or a history of wheezing, says Dr. Arrieta.

7 NUMBER OF DAYS SEVERE
FLU SYMPTOMS MAY LAST

6 months

AGE RECOMMENDED
TO BEGIN GETTING
YEARLY FLU SHOTS



1 billion

NUMBER OF COLDS
AMERICANS
SUFFER YEARLY



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