

PARISH NURSE MINISTRY

Back by popular demand the parish nurse ministry will be returning to Epiphany. We will be available between services and after services on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month and as needed at other times for urgent questions or needs. We are bound by HIPAA privacy laws, so information shared with us can only be shared with other people with consent.

We have expertise in the full range of the lifespan so we can assist with acute pediatric and adult illness symptom management, childhood illness concerns, pediatric and adult chronic illness management, specialist referral assistance, medication management and cost assistance, and discussion of new health diagnosis and new medication questions.

Most children and adults recover from Flu-like illnesses (Covid, Flu, RSV, common cold) without prescription medication. Our main concerns are hydration and work-of-breathing. Please look at the signs of respiratory distress and dehydration. If you or your child is experiencing any of these signs please call 911 or go to the closest Emergency Department for adults and for children go to the closest pediatric hospital emergency department (Children's Health Dallas, Children's Health Plano, Medical City Dallas Pediatric Emergency Department, Cook's Children's Hospital). Here is some care advice while you recover:

- Warm saltwater gargle for sore throat.
- Nasal saline irrigation (followed by suction of nasal secretions in toddlers who cannot blow nose). This is especially helpful before meals and sleep.
- Vicks VapoRub on chest for adults and children over the age of 2. Infant formula Vicks for children between ages 6 and 24 months. No Vicks for under 6 months.
- Steam from a hot shower can be really helpful to loosen chest congestion. Run a very hot shower and stay in the bathroom to breathe in the steam. Do not take the child into a hot shower. It is just to make steam.
- Cool mist humidifier for congestion. DO NOT add Vicks or anything else to the water. Just plain water.
- Honey may be used for cough in children OVER age 1. Use agave syrup for children under 12 months. 1/2-1 teaspoon every 2-4 hours. NO HONEY FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12 MONTHS. If you have diabetes, ask your medical provider for advice about whether or not you can have honey.
- Acetaminophen as needed for fever or discomfort. Ibuprofen may also be used for children OVER 6 months old. If you or your child has stomach upset or vomiting, give only acetaminophen (Tylenol) as ibuprofen can be irritating to the stomach. Always give ibuprofen with breast milk, formula, or food. Do not take Tylenol if you have liver disease unless your medical provider has told it is safe to do so, and follow their dosing recommendations. Do not take ibuprofen if you have kidney disease unless your medical provider has told you it is safe to do so and follow their dosing guidelines.
- Monitor for dehydration. For infants, ensure frequent feedings (if taking less, offer more frequently), and monitor number of wet diapers to ensure no dehydration. The goal is 5-6 diapers every 24 hours. For toddlers, older children, and adults, urinating 5-6 times is also the goal. Monitor for dry cracked lips and/or sunken eyes.

- Viral upper respiratory tract infection symptoms can last a few weeks, symptoms can be worse on day 4-5, but should improve after this, and children should not develop new symptoms after day 5. Call if any concerning changes.
- Seek medical evaluation for fever for more than 3 days, inability to drink adequate liquids, decreased urine output, lethargy, difficulty breathing, or any other concerns.
- We are expecting to see many back-to-back viral illnesses all winter and spring due to being socially isolated for so long which has left us unexposed to the many common viruses that circulate in the community that strengthen our immune response.

Please go to the ER or call 911 if:

- Fever is greater than 102 F that does not come down within an hour of taking fever reducing medications (Tylenol or ibuprofen)
- Child or adult becomes hard to awaken or unusually drowsy
- Child or adult is having signs of dehydration, including: dry mouth/mucus membranes, tearless crying, inability to drink adequate fluids, no wet diapers > 3 hours, longer than 4 hours without urinating for adults.

Respiratory distress signs:

- Blue coloration around mouth or nose
- Flaring nostrils with every breath
- Skin sucking in around ribs or collar bone with every inhalation (respiratory retractions)
- Making a moaning or grunting sound with every exhalation (respiratory grunting)
- Leaning forward with hands on legs for support (respiratory posturing)
- Continuous respiratory rate of 40 per minute or higher in child or higher than 20 per minute for adults