

# Saint David's Health News

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Page 1

Dear Parents,

In addition to attending to your child's health and safety needs during the school day, as the School Nurse my role includes teaching him how to achieve and maintain his optimum level of health and well-being. I view every interaction with the boys as an opportunity to educate them about what it means to be healthy in body, mind, and spirit.

I intend to keep you informed about health and safety topics that may affect your family, both through the *Saint David's Health News* and the *Health* section of the school's website. Please visit the website for the latest information about the flu vaccine.

Please feel free to contact me in person, by phone, or via e-mail ([ahaddad@saintdavids.org](mailto:ahaddad@saintdavids.org)) with any questions regarding your child's health and safety.

I wish your family a happy, healthy school year!

My best,

Annie Haddad

## F.D.A. PANEL RECOMMENDS BAN ON COLD MEDICINES FOR CHILDREN UNDER SIX YEARS OF AGE

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

The Nonprescription Drugs Advisory Committee of the Food and Drug Administration recently recommended that popular over-the-counter cold remedies used for children under 6 years of age be banned from the market. The Committee, after reviewing safety and efficacy studies of the ingredients of these medicines, cited lack of proof that the remedies are effective in relieving cold symptoms. In rare instances, use of such products in young children has caused serious side effects. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports the ban. Its website ([www.aap.org/new/kidcolds.htm](http://www.aap.org/new/kidcolds.htm)) includes a list, released by the Consumer Healthcare Products Association, of the products that are to be withdrawn from the market.

The nasal congestion, fever, and body aches that are typical of a cold may lead to lack of sleep, loss of appetite, tiredness, and irritability. No wonder parents want to relieve their child's symptoms and ease their misery! It is important to realize, however, that there is no cure for the common cold, and that with time, children get better. Here is advice from the F.D.A. about using cough and cold products for your child:

- Do **NOT** use cough and cold remedies for children under the age of 2 unless directed to do so by your child's physician.
- **NEVER** give children medicine that is packaged for adults. The package label should either indicate "Pediatric" or be marked for babies, infants, or children.
- Always consult with your child's pediatrician if you are unsure as to what product is right for your child.
- If your child is on prescription or other over-the-counter medicines, your pediatrician should review them and approve their combined use.
- Always familiarize yourself with the "**Active Ingredients**" and the "**Warnings**" for any medication you give your child. This information may be found in the "**Drug Facts**" box on the package.
- **NEVER** give your child medicine more often or in greater amounts than is stated in the directions.
- **ALWAYS** use the measuring device that is packaged with the product and that is marked to deliver the correct dose. If no device is included, purchase one at the pharmacy. Using kitchen teaspoons and tablespoons will not provide an accurate dose of the medicine.
- If your child's condition worsens or does not improve, stop using the medication and call your pediatrician.
- Remember that no medication can cure the common cold!

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Page 2

## EVALUATING HEALTH-RELATED WEBSITES

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus)

With so many health-related web sites to choose from on the Internet, it becomes difficult for consumers to evaluate the available information for quality, accuracy and reliability. How do you separate the wheat from the chaff? Here are some tips from the **National Library of Medicine** on how to evaluate health information on the Web:

### 1. **Use Reliable Sources:**

- Check to see who runs the site: is it from a professional organization, the government, a non-profit organization, or an individual.
- Look for contact information: if there is none, be skeptical.

### 2. **Assess the Quality:**

- The site should have an editorial board made up of experts in the field, who review information that is posted. Look in the "About Us" section of the site for a description of the process by which information is selected or approved.
- Look for an "About Our Authors" section to determine who has written the material on the site. It should either be an individual or an organization, i.e., "Copyright 2007, American Heart Assn."

### 3. **Beware of Quackery:**

- Beware of "breakthrough" or "secret ingredient" cure claims, and watch out for sensational writing, i.e., lots of exclamation points.
- Be skeptical of excessive technical writing-the material should be presented in a clear and simple style.
- Check more than one sight for another opinion.

### 4. **Check for Currency:**

- Look for dates on documents. One discussing the latest treatment of an illness should be current.
- If there are a lot of broken links on a site, it may not be kept current.

### 5. **Watch Out for Bias:**

- Find out who's paying for the site.
- Advertisements should be clearly labeled.

### 6. **Make Sure Your Privacy is Protected:**

- Review the site's policy, and if it states that your information is shared with another enterprise, your privacy is being violated. This is important especially if you have to provide personal information to view the site's contents.

### 7. **Always Consult Your Health Care Provider:**

- Speak to a health professional before making any decisions

## BACTERIAL MENINGITIS

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Bacterial meningitis is a life-threatening inflammation of the lining that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. The alarming fact about the disease is that symptoms develop and progress rapidly and, if untreated, can result in death within 24 to 48 hours.

Symptoms of meningitis typically include headache, stiff neck, and fever. If the bacterium enters the bloodstream, a red and purple rash may appear on the skin.

Meningococcal bacteria are spread through contact with respiratory secretions. Living in a community setting such as a dormitory, camp, or boarding school increases the risk of contracting the disease.

The best way to prevent meningitis is by careful hand washing, especially before eating and after using the bathroom. Children, especially those living in dormitories or camps, should be instructed to never share toothbrushes or eating utensils.

The **Food and Drug Administration** recently expanded the approved age range for **Menactra**, a vaccine to prevent bacterial meningitis, to include children ages 2 to 10 years. Consult with your