

Live Well Work Well

October 2023



Franklin Township Public Schools

What to Know About This Year's Flu Season

Influenza (flu) season lasts from October through May in the United States, with peak flu activity between December and March. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the timing and duration of flu activity have been unpredictable. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported early increases in seasonal flu last year. The Southern Hemisphere also experienced an early surge of flu activity this year, which may indicate what's to come in the United States.

Furthermore, health experts anticipate another wave of respiratory viral infections this fall, namely from the flu, the virus that causes COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Fortunately, vaccines for all three viruses will be available for the first time in the fall. [Vaccinations](#) have been shown to reduce hospitalizations and death and may be particularly beneficial for those with compromised health.

Brightline News

World Mental Health Day is October 10 and ADHD Awareness Month is the entire month of October. See the attached Brightline materials in support of behavioral health solutions for kids and families.

Tips for Staying Healthy

The flu can cause serious complications for people of any age, but children and older adults are especially vulnerable. To help keep your [household healthy](#) this flu season, consider the following tips:

- Get vaccinated. Being vaccinated against the flu is your best chance of preventing the illness. The CDC recommends that anyone 6 months and older get a flu shot every year. The flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same visit.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay away from others when you feel unwell. Because flu and COVID-19 symptoms are similar, doctors suggest testing to know what you have.
- Wash your hands often using soap and warm water to protect against germs. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Sleep well, stay active, and drink plenty of water to keep your immune system strong.
- Eat a nutritious diet of healthy grains, fruits, vegetables, and fiber.

September and October are the best months to get vaccinated against the flu, so don't delay—make an appointment for your no-cost flu vaccine today. See the attached flyer or log into the [Aetna member website](#) to get started.

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Where Are the Germiest Places?

Germes are a part of life—and they're everywhere. The dry air associated with fall and winter also makes it easier for germs to spread and linger in the air. Here are some germ hot spots:

- **Home**—Remote controls, kitchen counters, bathroom fixtures and handles, sponges, and toothbrush holders
- **Workplace**—Desktops, keyboard, mouse, chair armrests, writing tools, handles, switches, and doorknobs
- **School**—Water fountains, doorknobs, desks and tables, shared school supplies, cafeterias, and playgrounds

Hand-washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs, especially after sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose.

Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests

Starting September 25, 2023, free at-home COVID-19 tests will once again be available to order through [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov). At-home tests are a tool to help stop the spread, avoid hospitalizations, and defend against serious illness. Order at [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov).

Stocking a Nutritious Kitchen

You don't need to master the art of meal planning to [eat well](#) during the week. It can be as simple as stocking your kitchen with mealtime building blocks. Consider keeping these nutritious pantry, fridge, and freezer staples on hand to make healthy eating easy:

- **Canned chickpeas** can easily be added to soups or mashed with seasonings for extra protein and fiber.
- **Chicken breast** is a great protein to build a meal around. You could make pasta, soups, casseroles, sandwiches, and more.
- **Extra-firm tofu** is full of plant-based protein and calcium. Its neutral flavor makes it great for stir-fries and curries.
- **Quinoa or lentils** are versatile options to round off meals. They are packed with fiber and protein.
- **Whole-wheat spaghetti** is a great last-minute meal idea. It has a sizable dose of fiber and helps reduce cholesterol.
- **Frozen spinach** can easily go in egg dishes, pasta, or smoothies. It is packed with four times the nutrients of fresh spinach.



Healthy Recipe Leafy Tofu

With these healthy basics on hand, you can toss together nutritious meals that require minimal effort. *Makes: 6 servings*

Ingredients

- 1 package tofu
- 1 Tbsp. oil
- 4 cups fresh spinach
- 2 Tbsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame seeds

Preparations

1. Drain the tofu. Dice it into 1-inch cubes.
2. Tear the spinach into bite-sized pieces.
3. In a large pan, heat the oil and saute the tofu cubes for a few minutes. Move the tofu to the center of the pan.
4. Add the spinach and soy sauce. Mix.
5. Cover the pan and cook until the spinach is wilted.
6. Sprinkle on the sesame seeds.

Nutritional Information (per serving)

Total calories	77
Total fat	5 g
Protein	7 g
Sodium	216 mg
Carbohydrate	2 g
Dietary fiber	1 g
Saturated fat	1 g
Total sugars	1 g

Source: MyPlate

5 signs your child might need a therapist

Figuring out whether your child needs extra mental health support can be a challenge, and in short: There's no right answer. Therapy helps kids of all ages with challenges big & small, with or without a clinical diagnosis at play. Here are a few warning signs to keep in mind as you consider their mental health needs:

1

YOUR CHILD IS ACTING OUT MORE OFTEN

Whether you're dealing with constant tantrums or your kid just won't listen, acting out can be developmentally appropriate — but increased severity and frequency might be a warning something bigger is going on.

2

EVERYDAY ROUTINES ARE BEING DISRUPTED

Is bedtime suddenly impossible? Is your kid struggling to complete their homework? If their behavior is impairing their ability to function, you might want to enlist a therapist's help.

3

YOUR KID STRUGGLES TO ENJOY THEMSELVES

Part of coping with stress is doing things you like to do. One symptom of anxiety or depression is losing interest in those things or being too upset to do them.

4

THEIR EMOTIONS ARE A ROLLERCOASTER

Kids with anxiety or depression might also struggle with emotional regulation — look for mood swings that feel out of proportion to the situation.

5

YOU NEED EXTRA SUPPORT

If you're stressed about your child's mental health, you're not alone. It's okay if you need help! Expert input & encouragement from a therapist can help you navigate this challenge as a family.

Support your family's mental health with Brightline:



Fast access to personalized support — schedule video visits within days



Evidence-based care from experts with years of experience working with kids



Track your family's progress on our one-stop digital platform

Learn more at hellobrightline.com

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6 steps to break the stigma: A mental health checklist for parents

If you feel like you're still learning about what mental health is and what it looks like, that's completely normal — the lack of education and open conversation about mental health challenges is one of the big reasons it continues to be such a taboo topic! Not sure where to start? Check out 6 recommendations from one of Brightline's expert behavioral therapists for creating a positive mental health environment for your family:

- ☐ **Examine your own relationship with mental health**
Think about the messages you received growing up, and consider getting expert help if you find yourself struggling you haven't sought out support.
- ☐ **Create open lines of communication with your kids**
Identify a regular time to check in with your child about their day, and ask them about any highs or lows of their day. Share yours with them too!
- ☐ **Hold a safe space for your child's mistakes**
Shaming statements like "How could you," or "I thought you would do better," might not seem like a big deal at the time, but they imply to your child that they have to be perfect all the time or they've failed you. To increase the likelihood that they'll continue to come to you when big stuff happens, practice listening without problem solving.
- ☐ **Normalize big feelings, especially during tough moments**
When your kid is angry about something, reflect their words back to them without judgment, and don't invalidate or minimize their feelings. You could say something like, "It's okay you're mad."
- ☐ **Be aware of and counteract negative messages in society**
Repeat the values you've taught them any time you can model acceptance and openness instead of judgment.
- ☐ **Get expert help if you need it**
You probably won't always know what to say to your child — that's okay! Chatting with an expert therapist or behavioral health coach can give you the tools you need to navigate these challenges as a family.

“Is my kid acting their age... or is it ADHD?”

Did you know that ADHD affects nearly 1 in 10 kids and teens in the U.S.? Whether you're questioning if your child may be one of them, or you're navigating a new diagnosis, here's what to know:

SO WHAT IS ADHD?

ADHD is a constellation of signs & symptoms grouped into two categories: inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity. Kids with combined ADHD will show signs of both types.

SIGNS OF PREDOMINANTLY INATTENTIVE ADHD

- Easily distracted
- Trouble starting & finishing projects
- Struggle with listening
- Frequently forgetful

SIGNS OF HYPERACTIVE-IMPULSIVE ADHD

- Fidgeting and struggles staying seated
- Excessive talking
- Trouble taking turns
- Acts without considering the consequences

SIGNS OF ADHD CAN OVERLAP WITH NORMAL KID BEHAVIOR

Kids are often unmatched for their energy and spur-of-the-moment ideas — sometimes a kid who's literally climbing the walls is simply “acting their age.”

SOMETIMES OTHER CONDITIONS MIMIC ADHD

These range from hearing problems and learning disabilities, to anxiety and depression. (~60% of kids with ADHD also have another behavioral health issue that might need extra support.)

ONLY HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CAN DIAGNOSE ADHD

To start the process, you'll need to have an open conversation with them about how your child's behavior affects their daily life. Don't forget: Brightline's experts are here to help.

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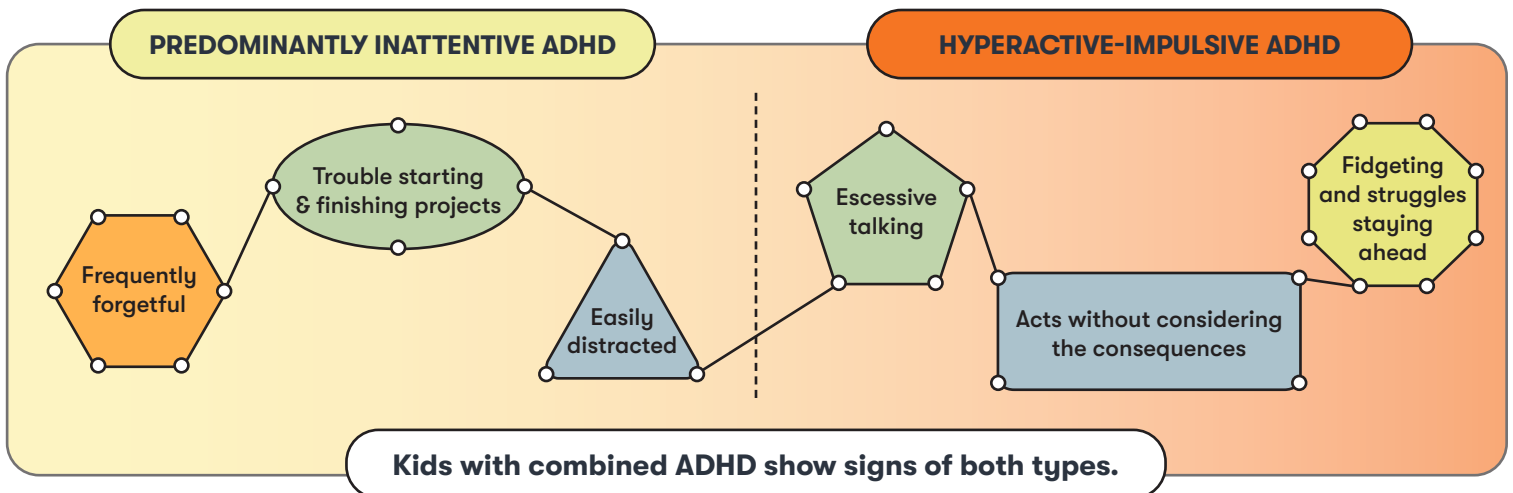
Good girls don't have ADHD

WHY ADHD IN GIRLS GETS IGNORED

Did you know that girls are 3x less likely to be diagnosed with ADHD?

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

ADHD IS A CONSTELLATION OF SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



WHEN WE THINK OF KIDS WITH ADHD, GIRLS DON'T ALWAYS FIT THE STEREOTYPICAL SYMPTOMS

BOYS are more likely to present with combined symptoms.

Pacing

Fidgeting

Interrupting

GIRLS are more likely to present with inattentive symptoms.

Executive Function

Daydreaming

Disorganization

Girls with ADHD are also usually good at masking or flying under the radar by hiding their symptoms

Daydreaming but it looks like they're paying attention

Categorized as "odd" or "different"

Part of a gifted & talented program

MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA ALSO PLAYS A ROLE...

"She gets such good grades"

"That's a boy thing"

"She just needs to focus"

"But she's so well-behaved!"

"She just has anxiety..."

It can be tough for parents who want to avoid "labeling" their kid with what is commonly perceived as an issue. But getting **misdiagnosed** or going without treatment can lead to a lifetime of challenges:

Anxiety	Self-harm
Low self-esteem	Emotional dysregulation
Depression	Self-medicating with alcohol

HOW TO CLOSE THE GAP

Parents, teachers, & mental health professionals can educate themselves about how gender affects mental health challenges.

When treated properly, **new behaviors** can be put into place that lead to **healthier habits**. If needed, therapy and medication can help manage and treat ADHD.



Your flu shot is covered

Your no-cost flu shot helps protect you and those you love.

Getting your flu shot early is one of the best ways to build your immunity. The vaccine is safe and effective, and helps protect you and those around you. You can even get your flu shot and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time.

Who needs a flu shot?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone six months and older should get a flu shot every season with rare exceptions.¹

Getting vaccinated is especially important for high-risk individuals:

- Pregnant people
- Children under the age of five
- School-aged children
- Older adults
- Professionals in settings with high infection rates
- Anyone with a health condition
- Anyone with a weakened immune system

3 ways to make an appointment:



Walk in or schedule your vaccine appointment at a nearby CVS Pharmacy®:
[CVS.co/ScheduleFluShot](https://www.cvs.com/flu-shot)



Walk in or schedule a flu shot at a retail clinic, like [MinuteClinic®](#).



Log in to your member website at [Aetna.com](https://www.aetna.com) to find a local network pharmacy or doctor.

You can get your flu shot and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends COVID-19 primary series vaccines for everyone ages six months and older, and additional COVID-19 vaccines for everyone ages five years and older, if eligible.

When are you up-to-date with your vaccines?

Guidelines for vaccines may vary based on your age, the type of primary series vaccine you've received and the timing of your last dose.² Be sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure if you are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine.

One of the best ways to protect against serious illness and symptoms from the flu and other illnesses this year is to receive all vaccines you are eligible for. Use the link below to schedule both vaccines at a CVS® location near you.

Flu shot appointments are available now:



[CVS.co/ScheduleFluShot](https://www.cvs.com/ScheduleFluShot)

We're proud to recommend CVS Pharmacy® locations for flu shots.



**Get your flu shot at CVS,
and you'll get \$5 off your
next \$20 purchase.³**



Aetna®, a CVS Health® company is committed to working closely with your local pharmacy to help you feel your best. Making flu shots easy — it's another way **healthier happens together™**.

¹CDC. Who Needs a Flu Vaccine. October 27, 2021. Available at: [CDC.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinations.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinations.htm). Accessed August 11, 2022.

²CDC. Stay Up to Date with Your COVID-19 Vaccines. July 19, 2022.

Available at: [CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html#recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html#recommendations). Accessed August 11, 2022.

³FOR \$5 OFF \$20 COUPON: Redeemable in store at CVS Pharmacy® and Longs Drugs® locations only for one-time use only between 8/14/23-12/31/23. Coupon received via email after vaccination. Limit one per customer per eligible vaccine visit. \$5 savings applied to total qualifying purchase of at least \$20 (after other coupons and discounts are applied). Limit one coupon per transaction. Reward cannot be issued in AR, NJ, NY, at Target or Schnucks locations, or at MinuteClinic® locations in AR, MA, NJ, NY, PA and RI. Coupon is void if copied or transferred and where prohibited by law. Internet printed or counterfeit coupons prohibited. Original must be relinquished with purchase. ExtraCare® card required to receive savings. Coupon cannot be combined with any other CVS Pharmacy coupon. Coupon excludes alcohol, lottery, money orders, prescriptions and copays, pseudoephedrine/ephedrine products, postage stamps, prepaid cards, gift cards, newspapers and magazines, milk (where required by law or regulation), sale/promotional merchandise, bottle deposits, bus passes, hunting and fishing licenses and any imposed governmental fees or items reimbursed by a government health plan. Tax charged on precoupon price where required. No cash back. Retailer's coupon. Bearer assumes all sales/use tax liability. CVS reserves the right to modify this offer.

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