

One sick, two sick, still sick, boo sick

It all began with a bad night's sleep,

And I watched the old thermometer leap.

Then the vomit came and I said, "Oh, man."

And that's how our Week of Sickness began.

It's one of those you-know-you're-a-parent moments when you realize your child is sick—and a few hours later his brother is, too. Somehow mothers are expected to recognize symptoms and know when it's time to call the doctor.

I called the doctor three times in four days. On our visit to his office—when I thought I might be overreacting—the staff had to call a clean-up crew to the waiting area two minutes after we arrived. So apparently I guessed right.

Here are a few things I learned during our week of sickness:

1. Children are especially sweet and cuddly right before they vomit.
2. Never assume the fever is gone—especially if you take the temperature early in the morning. I never want to believe my mother on this but it's true. The temperature always goes up as the day goes on.
- ✖ 3. If one child is sick, and his brother says he's tired, don't tell him it's probably because he skipped his nap. Better find the thermometer.
4. Your mother can always diagnose your child's illness better by phone than you can in person.
5. Saying the grape-flavored Tylenol is "purple for the Ravens" only sells it the first time. The second time you had better have lots of M&Ms on hand.

6. Some medicines are only refrigerated to improve the flavor, as I learned after leaving the bottle on the counter all day and calling the pharmacy in a panic.

7. The house should always be stocked with popsicles and juice. You can't pick those up at the pharmacy drive-through.

8. Sick days are not days to worry about learning, nutrition, or productivity. The goal is survival.

9. After days of watching superhero DVDs, you might decide to try something creative with your children.

The cookies on the box will look like this:



Your cookies will look like this:



Then you'll realize you're just rotting teeth rather than minds.

So you'll send them back to the couch to watch another movie.



10. Be wary if your pediatrician—who could not be kinder or more knowledgeable—ends your well-child check-up with “So I’ll see you next year!” That was two weeks ago. Since then he and I have spoken six times and he’s seen us twice. I don’t think he’ll say that to us again anytime soon.

Only a little more time and this sickness will leave.

Just get through it and we may have earned a reprieve.