

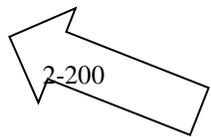
What the Experts Say

Colds & Flu

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WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Colds are responsible for more illness in children than all other diseases combined. Up to 50% of school absenteeism is caused by colds. **Children average 6 to 10 colds per year.**¹ In the US, colds tend to increase in frequency during the autumn and winter months. Attendance in day care increases the frequency of colds in children, as does the number of children in the group.²



WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

The common cold is the term used for a mild upper respiratory tract illness. Both colds and flu are caused by viruses and affect the upper respiratory tract. The main difference between them is the severity. Colds come on slowly with symptoms such as feeling tired, coughing, sneezing, or runny nose. Some cases are accompanied by low fever, sore throat, and head or body aches. The flu starts suddenly, symptoms are worse, and usually takes longer to get over. In most cases, the best thing to do is rest, treat symptoms, and wait for the virus to run its course.³

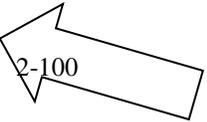
Because there are so many kinds of cold viruses, researchers do not expect a vaccine to be developed any time soon. There are fewer viruses that cause flu so there has been some success in developing vaccinations for flu. Annual vaccines have been shown to be effective in preventing flu. There are hundreds of over-the-counter medications used in treating colds and flu. Although they will not cure either colds or flu, they can reduce symptoms. Antibiotics are useless in treatment of colds and flu. There is still no conclusive evidence that using vitamin C, Echinacea, or zinc is effective in treating cold or flu viruses. Psychological stress and lack of exercise may be linked to increased risk of upper respiratory illness.²

Research is ongoing regarding causes of colds. There are several interesting findings that researchers are continuing to evaluate. Cohen states that people with more diverse social networks and social supports (spouse, parents, other family, friends, work associates, social groups) tend to have fewer colds.⁴ In addition, chronic and long-term stress and low socioeconomic status during childhood are associated with greater risk of viral disease as adults.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, National Institute of Health provides the following information regarding the common cold.⁵

Overview

Most colds are mild with symptoms lasting 1 to 2 weeks. Adults average 1 to 2 colds per year; children have 6 to 10 colds per year. One reason why colds are more prevalent in children is close contact with each other in day care and school. Rates of colds begin to increase in late August and decline in April. Researchers suspect this is due to school starting and to dryer air in winter. Most cold-causing viruses survive better in lower humidity, so cold weather may make the inside lining of your nose more vulnerable.



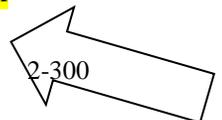
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Cause

More than 200 viruses are known to cause the common cold. Some viruses, such as rhinoviruses, seldom produce serious illness; others such as parainfluenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) may produce mild illness in adults but more serious problems in very young children. About 10% to 15% of viruses that cause colds in adults are also responsible for some types of influenza. There is no evidence that colds are caused from exposure to cold weather, getting chilled, or being overheated. Some studies suggest that psychological stress and allergic diseases affecting nose/throat may increase chances of catching a cold.

Transmission

There are two methods of getting infected by cold viruses: 1) touching skin or environmental surfaces (telephone, door knob, stair rails) that have cold germs on them and then touching your eyes or nose; and 2) Inhaling drops of mucus with cold germs (hanging in the air from someone's sneeze or cough).



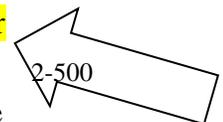
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Symptoms

Symptoms usually show 2 to 3 days after exposure and include stuffy nose, swelling sinuses, sneezing, sore throat, cough, headache, and sometimes fever. Symptoms that last longer than 14 days could mean an allergy or a bacterial infection (sinus or ear).

Treatment

There is no cure for the common cold, but traditional treatment continues to be recommended. This includes plenty of rest, drinking fluids, gargling with salt water, using lozenges, and taking aspirin or acetaminophen. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children with viral infections **not** be given aspirin. Aspirin is linked to the development of Reye's syndrome in children who have the flu or chickenpox. Reye's syndrome is a rare but serious illness that affects the brain and liver and most often occurs in children 3 to 12 years old.



2-500

Over-the-counter medications temporarily relieve symptoms but will not shorten or cure a cold. Some over-the-counter medicines have side effects. Consult with your doctor before giving them to children. **Do not take antibiotics to treat colds or flu.** Antibiotics do not kill viruses.

Prevention

The most effective prevention is hand washing. Other prevention methods include keeping hands away from eyes and nose, covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, and avoiding being close to others with colds.

Hand washing is especially important for the person with the cold to keep from spreading it to others. Teach children to wash hands after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing. Also teach children to wash properly – scrubbing vigorously for at least 15 seconds with warm, running water and soap.

Viruses live on skin or other surfaces for up to 3 hours. Disinfecting door knobs, faucets, stair rails, tables, and other surfaces helps stop the spread of colds and flu.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The American Academy of Family Physicians recommends the following for treating colds and flu³:

- Stay home and rest, especially with a fever.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, fruit juices, and clear soups.
- Avoid second hand smoke.
- In most cases, taking the child to the doctor is not necessary. Exceptions are fever above 102 degrees for extended period, breathing difficulties, not drinking fluids, an illness lasting more than 10 days or one that goes away and comes back.
- Occasionally, colds can lead to complications such as sinus infections, ear infections, or pneumonia. These are bacteriological infections that require medical attention and can be treated with antibiotics.
- Prevention measures discussed above should be used with preschoolers both at home and school.

REFERENCES

1. Holland PR, Mau MK, Yamamoto LG. Survey of parenting books for advice on the common cold, diarrhea, and otitis media in infants and toddlers. *Clin Pediatr (Phila)*. 2004;43:647-651.
2. Heikkinen T, Jarvinen A. The common cold. *Lancet*. 2003;361:51-59.
3. American Academy of Family Physicians. Information from your family doctor - colds and the flu: Tips for feeling better. American Academy of Family Physicians; 2006.
4. Cohen S. The Pittsburgh common cold studies: Psychosocial predictors of susceptibility to respiratory infectious illness. *Internat J Behav Med*. 2005;12:123-131.
5. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, National Institute of Health. Common Cold. Available at: <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/healthscience/healthtopics/colds/>. Accessed 01/11, 2007

*Quick Reference***COLDS & FLU
01-A2****Parent Messages**

- Colds and flu are caused by viruses, and last about two weeks.
- Antibiotics do not help viruses.
- The best prevention is hand washing and using tissues for coughs and sneezes.

Parent Skills

- All family members wash hands properly.
- Children cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Cleans and disinfects surfaces when a family member is ill to prevent spreading infection.
- Keeps child stays at home if running fever or has severe coughing or sneezing.
- Seeks medical advice if symptoms last more than two weeks or are accompanied by high fever.

Parent Tip**COLDS & FLU
01-A2**

Dear Parents,

Teach me how to keep from catching colds and flu and help me feel better when I do get sick:

- Make sure our whole family remembers to wash hands. It's the best way to keep germs from spreading.
- Remind me to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues (and wash hands again)!
- Dress me in layers so I can take things off when I get hot and put more on when I get chilly.
- If I get a cold or flu, keep me at home to rest if I have a fever or if I'm sneezing and coughing.
- Be sure I drink clear, non-sugary fluids such as water, juice, and soup.

Thanks,

Your Child



Kids are likely to get 6 to 10 colds each year! Colds and flu are caused by viruses and antibiotics don't cure viruses. **Virus germs live up to 3 hours on skin and other surfaces.** Disinfect sinks and door knobs to keep others from getting sick.

EL GRIPE Y LOS RESFRIADOS

Queridos Padres,

Ayúdenme a protegerme de contraer el gripe o un resfriado y también a sentirme bien cuando yo esté enfermo.

- Asegúrense de que toda la familia recuerden lavarse las manos. Es la mejor manera de no esparcir los gérmenes.
- Recuérdeme de cubrirme con pañuelos cuando tosamos o estornudemos (¡y de lavarnos las manos otra vez!)
- Si tengo resfriado o gripa, déjenme permanecer en casa reposando si estoy con fiebre o estornudando y tosiendo mucho.
- Asegúrense de que tome mucho líquido, sin azúcar como agua, jugos y sopas.

Gracias,

Su Hijo



¡Los niños son propensos a tener 6 a 10 gripas cada año! La gripe y los resfriados son causados por virus, quiere decir que los antibióticos no ayudan. Los virus pueden vivir por 3 horas en la piel o en otras superficies. Desinfectar los lavamanos, los tiradores de las puertas, puede ayudar a mantener las personas libres de enfermedad.