



What To Do ... Colds and Flu

Colds and flu viruses probably account for more unnecessary trips to the doctor than anything else.

The problem is, there's not much your doctor can do except provide you with sympathy and tell you what you already know: Rest, take a pain reliever, and drink plenty of fluids.

So keep these self-care suggestions on hand for the next time you come down with a cold or the flu. It could save you the supreme hassle (and expense) of an unnecessary doctor visit.

All information about colds and the flu on these two pages is provided by Hope Publications of the International Health Awareness Center, Inc., 616-343-0770 www.hithope.com.



Over-the-Counter Medicines?

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Americans waste more than \$1 billion a year on cold remedies "that simply don't work."

Ask your pharmacist for advice about cold and flu relief. Do **not** use TV commercials or magazine ads as a basis for your medicine choices.

Non-Prescription Medicines That Work

- **Headache:** Use aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen
- **Coughs:** An expectorant will liquefy the secretions and help your body cough up the material. Use a cough suppressant only in the late stages of a cough, when it is dry and hacking.
- **Throat lozenges:** for adults and older children.
- **Nasal congestion:** Use sprays or nose drops, such as Afrin.

What It Means "Urge Fluids"

For adults, this usually means drinking at least one eight-ounce glass of liquid every hour while awake.

"Saline gargle"

Add ½ teaspoon salt to two cups of warm or cool water. Gargle with this mixture, as needed, to relieve sore throat pain.

"Saline nose drops"

Add ½ teaspoon salt to two cups of warm water that has been boiled (to rid it of chlorine, which can cause congestion, and to sterilize it) or use distilled water. Administer with a dropper, as needed, to relieve nasal congestion.

"Honey-lemon cough mixture"

Mix two parts honey with one part lemon juice. The honey is soothing to the throat and also acts as an expectorant. The lemon juice helps reduce the viscosity of the phlegm. Adults may take this mixture by the teaspoon as needed. Children may take ½ teaspoon. Do not give honey to infants under age 1.

"Diarrhea diet"

Stick to clear fluids for 12 to 24 hours. When the diarrhea has stopped, use the "BRAT" diet: bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast. Avoid alcohol, coffee, citrus fruits and juices, fats, and dairy products (e.g., milk, yogurt, ice cream) for three to six days.

"Vomiting diet"

Suck on ice chips and Popsicles, if nothing else will stay down, to maintain hydration or sip lukewarm "de-fizzed" regular cola (helps control nausea; provides sugar). As you get better, try soup, bouillon, Jell-O, and applesauce.

Is It a Virus, Bacteria, or an Allergy?

	Virus*	Bacteria	Allergy
Runny and/or stuffy nose?	Often	Rare	Often
Aching muscles?	Usual	Rare	Never
Headache (non-sinus)?	Often	Rare	Never
Dizzy?	Often	Rare	Rare
Fever?	Often	Often	Never
Cough?	Often	Sometimes	Rare
Dry Cough?	Often	Rare	Sometimes
Raising Sputum?	Rare	Often	Rare
Hoarseness?	Often	Rare	Sometimes
Recurr at a particular season?	No	No	Often
Only a single complaint (sore throat, earache, sinus pain, or cough)?	Usual	Usual	Unusual
Do antibiotics help?	No	Yes	No
Can the doctor help?	Seldom	Yes	Sometimes

* Viral infections and allergies do not improve with treatment by penicillin or other antibiotics.

Viruses: The Big Three

Head Cold Symptoms, some combination of

- Sore throat
- Runny and/or stuffy nose
- Cough
- Congested ears
- Headache, dizziness
- Swollen glands
- Fever, chills

Influenza Symptoms

- Sore throat and nasal congestion (sometimes)
- Muscle aches (sometimes very uncomfortable)
- Dry cough
- Headache, dizziness
- Fatigue
- Fever, chills

"Stomach Flu" Symptoms

- Nausea, vomiting
- Abdominal cramps, diarrhea

Home Care Guidelines

1. **Take aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen** to relieve headache, muscle ache, and fever. Follow label directions. (Children and teens should use acetaminophen; children's aspirin use for viral illness is associated with Reye's syndrome.)
2. **Rest** (in bed, if necessary). If you feel well enough to be up and about, OK. Just take it easy. You're most contagious the one to four days before you come down with symptoms – not while you're ill.
3. **Drink plenty of liquids.** Your body needs extra fluids when you have a fever.

Also, extra fluids help keep the mucous more liquid, which can help prevent bacterial complications such as ear infections and bronchitis. Salty liquids (e.g., chicken soup, bouillon) can help with dizziness.

If you have a headache or cough, or are congested, a vaporizer can help you feel better and breathe easier. A steamy shower works, too. Warm washcloths on your forehead and upper cheeks can help relieve sinus congestion.