

THE COMMON COLD

Rhinoviruses are the most common source of colds, but many other respiratory viruses cause the common cold. Respiratory secretions from infected persons spread germs. This spread can occur by respiratory droplets or by touching an object contaminated with the virus. Colds occur more frequently in colder months, when people have close indoor contact, but may occur at any time of the year. Recovery usually follows in 7-10 days.

Symptoms may include:

- sore throat
- runny nose
- dry-hacking cough
- sneezing
- headaches
- body aches
- malaise/fatigue

Treatment suggestions:

- Get plenty of rest
- Increase fluids – stay hydrated
- Use a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer
- Use saline nasal rinse (See Allergy Hygiene article on our website for more information)
- Gargle with warm salt water several times a day to soothe a sore throat; suck on ice chips or lozenges
- Acetaminophen, naproxen or ibuprofen help relieve pain or fever
- Decongestants, such as pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine, help ease congestion
- Robitussin DM or Robitussin with Codeine for cough
- Depending on your other medical problems, you may want to discuss the use of the above medications with your physician
- Bacterial sinusitis, bronchitis or pneumonia precipitated by the common cold require antibiotics
- Some studies found zinc lozenges or syrup reduced the length of a cold when taken within 24 hours of first symptoms, read the label for directions; do not use intranasal zinc
- Vitamin C – will not prevent colds and only slightly reduces their length and severity

Reduce your risk of getting a cold:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds; encourage others to do the same, especially children; if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-base sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands to prevent virus transmission
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue, your upper shirtsleeve or elbow
- Stay away from people who are sick

In addition to the above practices - help protect others:

- Stay at home while you are sick
- Avoid close contact with others: handshaking, hugging, kissing
- Move away from people before coughing or sneezing
- Discard tissues directly into the trash
- Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects such as remotes, telephones, knobs and computer keyboards with antiviral wipes

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/rhinoviruses/index.html>
<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/fluold.htm>

February 4, 2020