

Common Cold

Colds are caused by viruses and are usually self-limiting. Most children will experience many colds in the first 2 years of life and often seem to get one right after another, especially in the winter months.

Symptoms of the common cold are fever, cough, congestion and runny nose. Other symptoms include loss of appetite, fussiness, sore throat, sneezing and watery eyes. Fever is usually low-grade and present during the first few days. Congestion and runny nose is often yellow or green in the first few days. Symptoms usually last 5-7 days but may last up to 10-14 days.

Because they are caused by viruses, there is no cure for the common cold and treatment is centered on relief of symptoms. Saline nasal drops and a cool-mist humidifier helps with stuffy noses. Tylenol or ibuprofen (for children over 6 months) helps with fever and may make your child more comfortable. Encourage fluids. Antibiotics will not kill viruses and are not helpful for colds.

The best way to avoid catching the common cold is prevention and avoiding contact with ill persons. Frequent hand-washing will prevent the spread of germs. Avoid sharing utensils or cups with anyone with cold symptoms. Remove smoke from the home.

When to call:

- ! If fever lasts longer than 2-3 days
- ! Symptoms not improved after 1 week
- ! If your child develops other symptoms such as ear pain.



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