

SEPTEMBER

Common Sense for the Common Cold

THE COMMON COLD

The common cold is a viral infection of your upper respiratory tract – your nose and throat. A common cold is usually harmless, and most people recover from them in about a week or two. Symptoms can include runny nose, sore throat, cough, congestion, body aches, sneezing, low-grade fever and/or mild fatigue. Because any one of 200 viruses can cause a common cold, symptoms tend to vary greatly.

HOME TREATMENT

There is no cure for the common cold. Antibiotics are of no use against cold viruses. Over the counter cold preparations won't cure your child's cold or make it go away any soon and most have side effects. You may not be able to cure your child's cold, but you can make them as comfortable as possible. These tips may help:

- **Drink lots of fluids.** Water, juice, and warm soup are all good choices. They help replace fluids lost during mucus production or fever.
- **Try chicken soup.** Generations of parents have spooned chicken soup into their sick children. Now scientists have put chicken soup to the test, discovering that it does seem to help relieve cold and flu symptoms in two ways. First, it acts as an anti-inflammatory by inhibiting the movement of neutrophils – immune system cells that help the body's response to inflammation. Second, it temporarily speeds up the movement of mucus through the nose, helping relieve congestion and limiting the time viruses are in contact with the nasal lining.
- **Get some rest.** Keep your child home from school if they have a fever or a bad cough or are drowsy from medications. This will give them a chance to rest as well as reduce the chances that they will infect others.
- **Adjust the temperature and humidity in your child's room.** Keep their room warm but not overheated. If the air is dry, a cool-mist humidifier or vaporizer can moisten the air and help ease congestion and coughing. Before ever use clean your humidifier to prevent the growth of bacteria and molds.
- **Use saline nasal drops.** To help relieve nasal congestion, try saline nasal drops. You can buy them over-the-counter and they're effective, safe and non-irritating for children. To use in babies, put 3-5 drops into one nostril, then immediately bulb suction that nostril. Repeat the process in the opposite nostril. Doing this before feeding your baby can improve your child's ability to nurse or take a bottle, and before bedtime it may improve sleep.

SLOW THE SPREAD OF COLD VIRUSES:

Healthy habits can protect you and your children from getting germs or spreading germs at home, work or school. Simple actions can stop germs and prevent illnesses.

- **Cover your mouth and nose.** Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Discard used tissues right away, and then wash your hands carefully. If you don't have a tissue, use the bend of your elbow. Teach your children to do the same.
- **Wash your hands.** Clean your hands thoroughly and often, and teach your children the importance of hand washing. Carry a bottle of alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol for times when soap and water aren't available.
- **Scrub your stuff.** Keep kitchen and bathroom countertops clean, especially when someone in your family has a common cold. Wash children's toys after play.
- **Don't share.** Don't share drinking glasses or utensils with other family members. Label the cup or glass with the name of the person with the cold.
- **Steer clear of colds.** Avoid close, prolonged contact with anyone who has a cold.