



SELF CARE COLD GUIDE

Upper Respiratory Infections or “colds” are inflammation of the upper respiratory tract caused by many different virus strains. *They cannot be cured by antibiotics.* However, over the counter medications may reduce symptoms. It is important to determine if you have a cold or something more severe. Colds are mainly spread by droplet infection, through kissing, sneezing, coughing and contaminated hands. Colds may last two to four weeks. To prevent the spread of virus, cover your mouth during sneezing and coughing. Wash your hands, especially after handling food and coming into physical contact with others.

SYMPTOMS

- Chills
- Cough bringing up clear mucous
- Dry hacking cough
- Fatigue
- Fever less than 101
- General body aches
- Headache
- Rundown feeling
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Sneezing & nasal congestion
- Sore or scratchy throat
- Watering eyes

REMEDIES FOR COMFORT

- Oral decongestants, such as Sudafed
- Throat lozenges
- Tylenol or Advil for body aches and fever every 4-6 hours
- Guaifenesin cough medicine for productive cough
- Dextromethorphan w/ Guaifenesin for dry cough
- Rest more than usual
- Drink plenty of fluids (avoid alcohol/caffeine)
- Avoid irritants. Don't smoke. Don't yell.
- Gargle with salt and warm water (1/2 tsp in 8 oz. of water) every 4 hours
- Humidify the air. Take a steamy shower.
- Chicken Soup (yes, your mother was right!)

Fever is an important part of your body's defense system used to combat the cold virus. Therefore, it is usually not necessary to reduce fever below 101 degrees unless you are very uncomfortable. Because a fever causes blood vessel dilation, you may experience head and body aches. We expect you to have cold symptoms for 7 to 10 days. If you get a fever of 101 degrees, difficulty breathing or if symptoms worsen, please call 685-2470 for an appointment.

Coughing helps rid your respiratory tract of foreign matter and secretions. There are two types of cough: a productive cough brings up foreign matter and mucous and should be encouraged rather than suppressed. A dry hacking non-productive cough is usually caused by respiratory irritation (e.g., smoking, postnasal drip). The dry type of cough may cause further irritation and interfere with daily activities, so suppression is helpful.