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UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION (URI OR COMMON COLD)

Colds, flu & upper respiratory infections are caused by viruses that inflame the membranes in the lining of the nose, throat and bronchial tubes. They are **NOT** caused by bacteria.

Common symptoms include one or more of the following:

- Nasal congestion
- Sneezing
- Cough
- Generalized “ sick” feeling
- Nasal discharge
- Hoarseness
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Watery eyes
- Stuffy ears

Symptoms usually last from 4 to 10 days. Yellow or green mucus does not mean you have a sinus infection. It is normal for the mucus to get thick and change color during a viral cold.

See your medical practitioner if you have any of the following:

- Persistent fever over 102 degrees Fahrenheit
- Sore throat longer than 3 days
- Chest pains/wheezing/shortness of breath
- Red, painful or enlarged tonsils
- Ear or face pain
- Cold symptoms for longer than 10 days

Using antibiotics for a virus:

- Antibiotics are prescription drugs that attack and either stop the growth of or kill bacteria.
- Antibiotics **will not** cure the infection.
will not help you feel better.
will not keep others from catching your illness.

Basic tips for prevention and treatment:

- Encourage & practice frequent hand washing
- Drink plenty of fluids & get plenty of rest
- Use over-the-counter cough & cold medications to treat symptoms
- Use cool mist vaporizer or saline nasal spray to relieve congestion
- Do NOT give aspirin to a child with a fever
- Avoid sharing drinks & eating utensils

Suggestions adapted from CDC handout 11/07