

Over-the-Counter Medications

Over-the-counter medications may help relieve some of your symptoms.

Pain relievers/fever reducers:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or aspirin relieve body aches, sore throats, headaches, and fever. Ibuprofen and naproxen should be taken with food. Never give aspirin to children or teenagers because it can cause Reye's Syndrome— a rare but neurological serious condition.

Decongestants:

Oral pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) helps relieve a stuffy nose, sinus pressure, and ear congestion by shrinking swollen membranes. People with high blood pressure should not use oral decongestants. Nasal decongestant sprays (Afrin) relieve stuffy noses, too. They should be used sparingly no more than 3 days because of rebound swelling.

Antihistamines:

These medicines (Benadryl, Chlortrimeton, Tavist...) dry up mucous secretions but may make you drowsy. This can help at night though.



Expectorants:

The medicine guaifenesin (Robitussin, Mucinex) will help loosen mucous so it can be coughed up and blown out of the nose.

Cough Suppressants:

Dextromethorphan (Robitussin DM) will quiet a cough and is most useful with a dry cough.

Combination Cold Medicines:

Some examples of these are Robitussin Night Relief, Nyquil, Dayquil, Tylenol Cold, and Advil Cold & Sinus. These mixtures may contain any combination of the following: expectorant, cough suppressant, antihistamine, decongestant, and pain reliever/fever reducer. Some also contain alcohol, so please read the label.

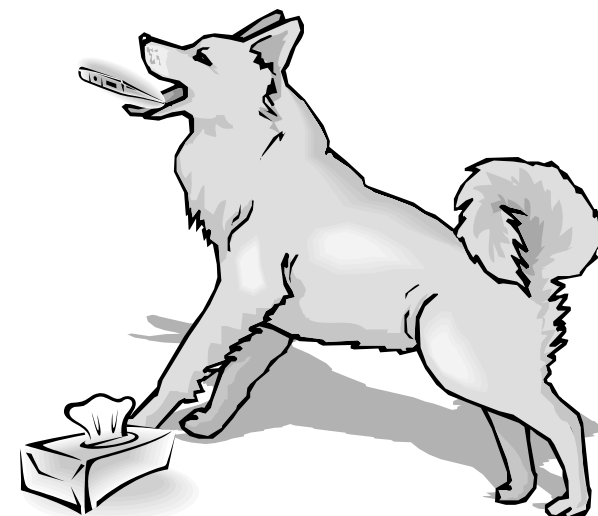


AS ALWAYS, IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY TAKING OTHER MEDICATIONS, CHECK WITH YOUR PRESCRIBER BEFORE ADDING OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS.

*University of Connecticut
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860- 486-3427 Advice Nurse
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THE COMMON COLD



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General Information

The common cold is an infection of the upper respiratory tract caused by a virus. Some colds are mild while others are severe. Regardless of severity, cold medications help relieve the symptoms of a cold. **You can expect to have symptoms for 7-10 days.**

Nothing cures the common cold including antibiotics. **Antibiotics ONLY treat bacterial infections.**

Symptoms

Symptoms of the common cold may include some or all of the following:

- Runny nose
- Nasal & sinus congestion
- Sneezing
- Cough with or without phlegm
- Sore or scratchy throat
- Headache & body aches
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Blocked feeling in the ears



Fever

If you have a fever, do not worry. Fever is an important part of your body's defense system used to combat the cold virus. You may experience head and body aches because the fever causes blood vessel dilation. It isn't usually necessary to reduce fevers below 101°F unless you are uncomfortable.



Cough

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 (smoking, post nasal drip). This type of cough may cause further irritation and interfere with daily activities, so suppression is helpful.

General Information

- Get plenty of rest: 8-10 hours of sleep while you are sick
- Drink 8-10 glasses of fluid daily (water, soup, juice). Fluids help nasal secretions loosen and drain, replace fluids lost with fever and relieve throat irritation.
- Increase humidity in your room if the air is dry. You can use hot showers or warm moist cloths to help with sinus pressure/nasal congestion.
- To soothe a sore throat, gargle with 1/2 teaspoon of table salt in 8 oz of warm water. Gargling works by warming and cleansing the throat and tonsils.
- Eat sensibly.
- Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking. Smoke dries and irritates mucous membranes. Alcohol has a dehydrating effect.

Cover your cough and sneezes and wash hands frequently to avoid spreading cold viruses.

If you have a fever over 101°F, difficulty breathing, or symptoms worsen, call the Advice Nurse or the Appointment Desk.