



What is a Cold?

A cold is an upper respiratory infection (URI) which can lead to a runny nose and congestion. In a young infant, the small size of the air passages through the nose and between the ear and throat can cause problems not seen as often in larger children and adults. Infants and young children average 6 to 10 upper respiratory infections each year.

How does it occur?

A URI can be caused by many different viruses. Your child may have caught the virus from another person or got it from touching something with the virus on it.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- * runny nose or mucus blocking the air passages in the nose
- * congestion
- * cough and hoarseness
- * mild fever, usually less than 100°F
- * poor feeding
- * rash

How can I take care of my child?

Unfortunately, there's no cure for the common cold. Antibiotics may be used to combat bacterial infections, but they have no effect on viruses, so the best you can do is to make your child comfortable. Make sure she gets extra rest and drinks increased amounts of fluids.

* Runny nose. If your child has a lot of clear discharge from the nose, it may not be a good idea to blow his nose. Sniffing and swallowing the mucus is better than blowing. Aggressively blowing the nose can force drainage into the ears or sinuses.

* Stuffy nose. Most stuffy noses are blocked by dry mucus. Try nose drops of warm tap water or saline. Saline drops or spray are better than any medicine you can buy and can be purchased from your local pharmacy without a prescription or you can make your own as described below.

1. Mix 1/2 teaspoon of table salt in 8 ounces of water.
2. Put 3 drops in each nostril.
3. Wait 1 minute.
4. Then have the child blow or you can use suction bulb. Use a wet cotton swab to remove mucus that's very sticky.

* Aches and fever. Give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) for fever over 101°F. Do not give aspirin.

* Cough or sore throat. Use cough drops for children over 6 years old. Use 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of honey for children over 1 year old. If you do not have honey, you can use corn syrup. Recent studies have shown that a spoonful of honey is more effective at suppressing cough in 2 -4 year olds than cough suppressant medication. Remember to never give honey to children under 1 year old. There are now homeopathic cough treatments available over-the-counter that mimic the effects of honey and can be purchased from your local pharmacy without a prescription:

- Chestal Cough for children 2 years and older
- Zarbees All Natural Cough Syrup for children 1 year and older

How long does it last?

Usually the fever lasts less than 3 days, and all nose and throat symptoms are gone in a week. A cough may last 2 to 3 weeks. Watch for signs of bacterial infections such as an earache, sinus pain, yellow drainage from the eyes, or breathing trouble.

Call the office right away if:

* Your child has a hard time breathing AND is no better after you clear the nose.

* Your child starts acting very sick.

Call the office during regular business hours if:

* The fever lasts more than 3 days.

* The runny nose lasts more than 10 days.

* The eyes get yellow discharge.

* You think your child may have an earache or sinus pain.

* You have other questions or concerns.