

Common Sense Cold Relief

Catching a cold is nothing to sneeze at: Poor sleep, low energy and reduced job productivity may make your life miserable for a week to 10 days.



To feel better and recover faster:

- Get 7 to 9 hours of sleep.
- Drink plenty of water daily.

To reduce congestion:

- Eat warm chicken soup or drink herbal teas.
- Try nasal irrigation.
- Try a humidifier.
- Avoid airway irritation from tobacco smoke.

Get your health provider's OK before taking any over-the-counter cold medications.

Did you know? Pediatric cold medicines are no longer recommended for children under age 4. Studies indicate they're ineffective for young children. They also pose risks for dosing errors and accidental ingestion. Evidence suggests older children might not benefit from these drugs, either. When youngsters get the sniffles, give them plenty of rest and fluids. Get their pediatrician's OK before using any medication.

Is it a cold or the flu?

Determining whether you have a cold, the flu or some other illness is important for knowing how to treat your symptoms.

	Cold	Flu
Typical symptoms	Stuffy nose, sore throat, sneezing	Fatigue, fever, headache, body aches, and coughing
Symptom severity	Mild	Intense
Related problems	Can lead to secondary infections such as sinusitis	Can lead to serious problems such as pneumonia and hospitalization
Duration	2-14 days, usually 1 week	Up to 2-3 weeks, with unusual fatigue

► **Watch for Whooping Cough.** Pertussis, or whooping cough, starts off with cold-like symptoms followed by intense coughing that can last up to 10 weeks.

What to do: Vaccinate your child. Adults and teens should get the pertussis booster, especially if they have contact with young children and infants. Seek treatment promptly if you contract pertussis.



Rest easy:
If you're sick, get your rest. A well-rested body is better able to build defenses.

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Keep Cold & Flu Away

Your Guide to Prevention and Self-Care



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Stay Well



While the common cold offers its share of misery — stuffy nose and sore throat — influenza (flu) presents more serious challenges and can be fatal for some. The tips in this brochure can help you protect yourself.

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a yearly vaccine.

The vaccine will protect you throughout flu season, and you won't need another until next year.

Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May. While getting vaccinated late in the flu season offers some protection, it's always best to get the shot as soon as vaccine is available.

Note: The vaccine takes 2 weeks to take effect, so get your shot as soon as possible.

Cold and Flu Myths and Facts

The flu shot can't give you the flu. Any soreness or fever is the body's normal reaction to getting a needlestick and building immunity, and should be temporary.

Cold weather doesn't cause colds. There are more colds during winter months because that is when it's easier for viruses to spread.



*Protect yourself.
Practice
A-W-A-Y:*

A void close contact with people who are sick. If you become sick, stay home and get plenty of rest.

W ash your hands with soap and warm water often. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available. Wash long enough to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.

A void touching your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent the spread of germs. And cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your forearm if you cough or sneeze.

Y ield to safe and healthy habits. Get a good night's sleep, eat nutritious foods, exercise often, manage stress and drink plenty of fluids.

Those most vulnerable to the flu and its potentially life-threatening complications (e.g., pneumonia) include seniors; young children; people with heart disease or other chronic medical conditions; smokers; and health care or child care workers.



I mmunity to colds and flu does not necessarily improve with age, because viruses are always mutating (changing). After childhood, adults may gain some immunity, but most people remain susceptible to colds and flu their entire lives.

That's why you need a flu shot every year.

Do-it-yourself care *for the flu:*

The age-old advice to drink plenty of fluids still holds. But avoid alcoholic and caffeinated beverages, which contribute to dehydration.

✓ **For a sore throat,** gargle with warm salt water or drink warm lemon water with honey.

✓ **To relieve congestion,** hold your face over a steaming cup of herbal tea or bouillon or take a warm shower.

✓ **Nonprescription drugs may help.** Consider a nasal decongestant or saline nasal drops for stuffy nose, expectorant to loosen phlegm, and an analgesic (pain reliever) for aches and fever.

✓ **A prescription antiviral can lessen flu severity.** It's most effective if it's taken within 48 hours of getting sick.

Important: Antibiotics kill bacteria and don't work against viruses. Your health care provider may prescribe an antibiotic if you develop a secondary bacterial infection of the sinuses, bronchial tubes or ears.

