

THE COMMON COLD

The common cold or upper respiratory infection (URI) is characterized by a clear runny or stuffy nose. Your child may have a mild sore throat and/or fever associated with this viral infection. Most children get about six colds per year; however, children in daycare centers may be infected more frequently. Colds are caused by direct contact with someone who has the virus, not by cold air or drafts, as is commonly believed. The course of the illness is of short duration, lasting 3 to 7 days. Usually an associated fever will only last for 2 to 3 days, but a cough, if present may linger for a few weeks. Colds can lead to bacterial infections that require an antibiotic. Such conditions are otitis media (ear infection), sinusitis, pneumonia, impetigo (skin infection), and conjunctivitis ("pink eye").

Treatment with Home Remedies: Try the following home remedies to manage your child's illness.

Runny Nose	Suction or blow it, and remember, when the nose runs like a faucet, it is washing out the virus invaders
Blocked nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use nasal washes. Use saline nose drops or spray to loosen up the dried mucus, following by blowing or suctioning the nose. Do nasal washes at least four times per day.
Coughing or Coughing Spasms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use home-made medicines and warm mist. Warm clear fluids (e.g. water or apple juice) to treat the cough (if over 1 month of age). Dosage 1 to 3 teaspoons (5 to 15 ml) four times a day when coughing for kids 2 to 12 months of age. Over 1 year of age, can offer unlimited amounts. Expose to warm mist (e.g. foggy bathroom). Honey (or corn syrup if honey is not available) ½ to 1 teaspoon (2 to 5 ml) as needed as a home-made cough medicine (if over 1 year of age). Cough drops (or hard candy) to coat the irritated throat (if over 6 years of age).
Increase Fluids	Drink plenty of fluids. Staying well hydrated thins the body's secretions, making it easier to cough and blow the nose.
Increase Humidity	For dry homes, humidity can reduce nasal congestion and coughing.

Cough and Cold Medicines: What do they do?... Not much.

- **Antihistamines** (such as Benadryl): Little help for colds. Helpful for nasal allergies or allergic coughs caused by pollen or cat dander. Also, great for hives or itchy rashes.
- **Decongestants** (such as pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine): May help reduce nasal congestion in some children with colds, but only lasts a few hours and can cause elevated blood pressure and restlessness.
- **Dextromethorphan** (DM): A cough suppressant that does not do much for children. Over 1 year of age, honey has been proven to work better (recent research). Do NOT use honey under 1 year of age.
- **Acetaminophen** (Tylenol) and **ibuprofen** (Advil): Used for treating pain or fever.
- **Antibiotics:** Never helpful for colds (which are caused by viruses) unless children also have a bacterial complication, such as an ear or sinus infection.



Call the office if:

1. The cough worsens or does not improve after two weeks.
2. The chest sounds congested.
3. There is ear pain.
4. There is persistent headache, unusual drowsiness, or fussiness.
5. Your child is having difficulty breathing that is not related to the runny nose.
6. There is a persistent nasal discharge present for a week.
7. Yellowish crusting or sores that appear around the nostrils.
8. Redness or matter in the eyes.

Please note: Your child's runny nose may be from allergies too.