

From the Health Clinic



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First Aid: Common Cold

Children can get eight colds a year - or more. The common cold sends more children to the doctor than any other illness. Most colds are caused by a specific type of virus found in the air and on the things we touch. The prescription for the common cold is simple: time, rest, and TLC.

Signs and Symptoms

- stuffy or runny nose (may start out watery, then turn thick yellow or green)
- itchy or sore throat
- sneezing
- cough
- headache
- mild fever
- feeling tired

- loss of appetite

What to Do

- Ease discomfort with:
 - acetaminophen or ibuprofen as needed (check package for correct amount)
 - a cool-mist humidifier or steamy bathroom
 - saline (saltwater) drops for the nostrils
 - gentle suction of nasal mucus using a bulb syringe when necessary
- Offer lots of fluids (breast milk or formula for babies; water and juice for older children - but no caffeinated beverages).
- **Never give cough or cold medicine to children under 2 years old.** Call a doctor first for older kids.
- **Never give aspirin** to a child.

Seek Medical Care If Your Child Has:

- cold symptoms that get worse or last more than a week
- cough and congestion triggered by pollen, dust, pets, etc.
- a barking cough or a cough that is severe and occurs in spasms
- difficulty breathing
- a high fever and appears ill; or any fever in a baby 3 months old or younger
- a sore throat that makes eating and drinking difficult
- a bad headache

Think Prevention!

Remind children to:

- avoid anyone who has a cold or smokes (secondhand smoke increases kids' risk of getting sick)
- wash hands well and often, especially after nose-blowing and playing with other kids
- sneeze and cough into shirtsleeves or tissues - not hands