

Common Cold

The cold is one of the most common forms of childhood illness. Most children will have many colds in the first two years of life, and it often seems they get one right after another, especially in the winter months. Healthy children average six colds per year.

Usual cold symptoms are: fever, cough, congestion and runny nose. Other symptoms can include loss of appetite, fussiness, sore throat, sneezing, and watery eyes. The fever is usually low-grade (101°F or lower), and lasts for the first few days of the cold. Congestion and runny nose are often yellow or green in color for the first few days. Cold symptoms usually last 5-7 days, but can last up to 10-14 days in some cases.

Colds are caused by viruses, and unfortunately there is no cure for the common cold. Treatment is limited to trying to relieve the symptoms of the cold. Congestion can be helped by cool-mist humidifiers and saline nasal drops. Fever can be treated with Tylenol® or ibuprofen (use ibuprofen only in children over the age of six months), and these pain relievers may help make your child more comfortable. Encourage your child to drink fluids.

Antibiotics will not kill viruses, and will not help with a cold. Prevent colds by avoiding contact with ill people, washing hands frequently, and by not sharing utensils or cups with others.

WHEN TO CALL:

- If fever is high (over 102°F), or lasts longer than 2-3 days.
- If symptoms haven't improved after 1 week
- If your child develops other symptoms, like ear pain or sore throat



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