

Treating the Common Cold

In general, you do not need to see a medical provider for a common cold. Most cases of the common cold get better without treatment, usually within 7 to 10 days. The best thing you can do is take care of yourself while your body heals. For example, drink plenty of liquids, saline nasal rinses and get adequate rest.

Antibiotics do not work for cold viruses and shouldn't be used unless there is a bacterial infection.

Relieving your symptoms can include using over-the-counter (OTC) medication to reduce fever, body aches, congestion and cough.

Fever and aches

- Drink lots of fluids. Water, juice, clear broth or herbal teas are good choices. Avoid caffeine and alcohol, which can dehydrate you.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) **325mg, two tabs every 4 to 6 hours. Do not exceed 4,000mg a day**
- Ibuprofen, **200mg, two tabs every 6 to 8 hours. This medication should be taken with food. Do not exceed 2400 mg per day.**
- If possible, stay home from work or school if you have a fever or a bad cough or are drowsy after taking medications. This will give you a chance to rest and heal, as well as reduce the chances that you'll spread your cold to others

Congestion

- Saline nasal spray or rinses
- OTC Decongestants: You can use decongestant drops or sprays for up to five days. Prolonged use can cause rebound symptoms
- Combination decongestant/antihistamines: Many combination products contain acetaminophen. Follow package instructions and be careful not to take more than the recommended amount of acetaminophen.

Cough

- Soup, herbal teas, lozenges
- Honey
- Over the counter cough suppressants-follow package directions

Sore Throat

- Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen for relief of pain.
- Herbal Tea
- A saltwater gargle of 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of table salt in 4 to 8 ounces of warm water can help soothe a sore throat. Gargle the solution and then spit it out.
- You can also try ice chips, lozenges or throat sprays.