

## Treating the Common Cold

Colds go away on their own. Your immune system is the best medicine for a cold. To support your body to respond to illness you need good nutrition, plenty of fluids, and adequate rest. Antibiotics do not shorten the course of the cold or cure the cold. Here are some things you can do to relieve symptoms or to boost your immune response. Talk to our pharmacists about which of these is best for you and for your budget.

### Fever and aches

- Soup, bed rest, liquids. Don't run the engine on empty. Try to eat something. Drink lots of fluids.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol), 325mg, two every 4 to 6 hours. Do not exceed 3,000mg a day
- Ibuprofen, 200mg, two every 6 to 8 hours. Take with food.

### Congestion

- Soups, teas, hot liquids, hot showers – anything that moistens and loosens secretions.
- Neti Pot (Nasal Irrigations) – ask for handout. Supplies at the pharmacy.
- Decongestants: Oral decongestants may disrupt sleep. Used as nose spray for more than 4 days these can cause rebound congestion.
- Combination decongestant/antihistamines: expensive. May either make you tired or disrupt your sleep. Often also contain acetaminophen. Be careful not to take too much acetaminophen.

### Cough

- Soup, teas (Breathe Easy tea), lozenges, hot liquids
- Honey—the most effective available treatment for cough.
- Dextromethorphan—an over the counter cough suppressant. Two teaspoons every six
- Wild Cherry Bark Cough Syrup – Woody, earthy flavor but effective.
- Guaifenesin – to thin secretions. In Mucinex. Not effective but won't hurt you.
- Codeine Cough Syrups – no better than dextromethorphan, more side effects and more expensive.

### Sore Throat

- Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen for relief of pain.
- Hot or very cold liquids (Throat Coat tea).
- Lozenges
- Salt Water Gargles (1/2 teaspoon salt in 8 ounces of water)
- Slippery Elm or Honey Loquat Drops

### For boosting Immune response

Talk with the pharmacist about which is best for you and your budget. Used correctly they can shorten duration and severity of colds and flu. Some work best only if started at first sign of a cold. Talk to the pharmacist or your provider about how to use these products.

- Elderberry Tincture
- Counter Attack
- Zinc/Elderberry Lozenges
- Gypsy Cold Care Tea

SYMPTOM	COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES	STREP THROAT	MONO
ONSET	Gradual	Abrupt	Flares and Remits	Fairly rapid	Moderate
FEVER	Low Grade or None	High Fever	None	Moderate	Not always
SORE THROAT	May start with this	Mild	Sometimes in the AM	Severe with white spots	Mild to very severe
NASAL CONGESTION	Yes	Minimal	Significant	None	Minimal
COUGH	Yes	Dry Cough	Occasionally wheezing	None	No
HEADACHE	Usually frontal	Yes	Frontal/Sinus HA	Sometimes	Sometimes
ACHING	Mild	Severe	No	Mild to Moderate	Sometimes
FATIGUE	Mild to Moderate	Severe	No	Moderate	Moderate to Severe

### How Long Will Cold Symptoms Last?

- Fever and sore throat generally improve within **4 DAYS**.
- Cough and nasal discharge may last **2 WEEKS or MORE**. (Typically, the discharge turns yellow and/or green within this 2 week period.)

Day of Illness	Fever (%)	Sore Throat (%)	Cough (%)	Nasal Discharge (%)
1	15	45	50	30
2	18	40	55	35
3	15	40	60	35
4	10	35	60	35
5	5	25	45	35
6	5	15	35	35
7	5	10	30	30
8	5	5	25	25
9	5	5	20	20
10	5	5	15	15
11	5	5	15	15
12	5	5	15	15
13	5	5	15	15
14	5	5	15	15

**Colds are caused by viruses, *not* bacteria. Antibiotics *DO NOT* work for viruses.**