

Colds

Colds are caused by viruses and are spread from person to person. Fever is uncommon and the runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, and coughing caused by colds usually resolve in 7-10 days. Clear nasal discharge often turns white, yellow or green before clearing up. Colds are most frequent in the fall and winter and can occur 6-10 times per year in young children.

Antibiotics and cold medications do not cure colds, but there are many over the counters and prescription cold medicines intended to improve the symptoms. These medications can contain decongestants, antihistamines, cough suppressants and expectorants. Cold medicines sometimes can cause relief, but are often **NOT** helpful. They can cause side effects such as sleepiness, jitteriness or rapid heart rate. I only recommend using cough and cold medications **SPARINGLY**, primarily when the symptoms are severe enough to interfere with sleeping.

What to do for colds?

For infants, when nasal congestion interferes with feeding or sleeping, use normal saline drops (Ayr, Little Noses etc.) squirt in each nostril. Then use a nasal bulb aspirator to remove the softened and thinned mucus. Use a cool mist humidifier in the bedroom, apply a menthol vapor rub (baby vicks) on the chest and give plenty of clear fluids. You can also have the baby sleep on an incline, and use the care seat, if this keeps them more comfortable. Frequent hand washing is helpful in reducing the spread of cold viruses, but catching colds from siblings, parents, and schoolmates is very difficult to avoid.

Call our office if you have any concerns about your child's illness or if your child:

1. Is wheezing, having noisy breathing or breathing harder or faster than usual.
2. Is extremely fussy, sleepy or inactive
3. Develops a rash
4. Is less than 2 months old
5. Has persistent high fever
6. Complains of an ear ache or has persistent thick eye discharge.