

Note: This **CareKit™** does not replace expert medical care.

Common Cold

While you are reading this **CareKit™**, about 30 million people in the U.S. have the common cold.

Colds are caused by more than 200 different cold viruses. They are very contagious. The average person gets 3 to 4 colds a year.



Prevention

- Wash your hands often. Keep them away from your nose, eyes, and mouth.
- Try not to touch people or their things when they have a cold.
- Get regular exercise. Eat and sleep well.
- Use a tissue when you sneeze, cough, or blow your nose.
- Use a cool-mist vaporizer in your bedroom in the winter.

Signs & Symptoms

- Runny, stuffy nose, and sneezing
- Sore throat
- Dry cough
- Mild fever, if any



A cold usually lasts 3 to 7 days. In older persons, though, a cold can last longer. The cough that comes with a cold can last a few weeks after the other symptoms go away.

Causes & Care

You can get a cold virus from mucus on a person's hands when they have a cold, such as through a handshake. You can also pick up the viruses on towels, telephones, money, etc. Cold viruses travel through coughs and sneezes, too.

Self-care usually treats a cold.

Antibiotics **do not** treat cold viruses. Persons with some health conditions, such as asthma, should consult their doctors for advice to manage symptoms.

Self-Care

- Drink lots of liquids.
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever. **Note:** Do not give aspirin to anyone under age 19. Aspirin and other medicines with salicylates have been linked to Reye's Syndrome.
- For nasal congestion, use salt water drops, such as Ocean brand or a saline nasal spray.
- Use a cool-mist vaporizer to add moisture to the air.
- Have chicken soup to clear mucus.

- Check with your doctor about using zinc lozenges, echinacea, and/or high doses of vitamin C.

For a Sore Throat

- Gargle every few hours with warm salt water ($\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt dissolved in 1 cup of warm water).
- Have warm drinks like tea and soup.
- Suck on a piece of hard candy or medicated lozenge. (**Do not** give to children under age 5.)



Contact Doctor For:

- Quick breathing, trouble breathing, or wheezing
- A temperature of 104°F or higher in a person age 3 to 65 (102°F or higher in a person age 65 or older)
- Temperature between 102.2°F and 104°F in a child 3 months to 3 years old.
- Temperature between 99.5°F and 100.4°F in a baby less than 3 months old.
- A bad smell from the throat, nose, or ears or an earache

- A headache that doesn't go away
- A bright red sore throat or sore throat with white spots
- Cough with mucus that is yellow, green, or gray
- Pain or swelling over the sinuses that worsens with bending over or moving the head, especially with a fever of 101°F or higher
- Symptoms that get worse after 4 to 5 days or don't get better after 7 days
- Symptoms other than a slight cough that last for more than 14 days.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), is an infection of the lungs and breathing passages. In adults and in children over age 3, RSV symptoms are like those of a cold. In children under age 3, however, RSV can cause a lower respiratory tract infection, such as bronchiolitis or pneumonia.

Infants 2 to 6 months old are more prone to these conditions.



Signs and Symptoms of RSV

In children under age 3, these symptoms need immediate medical care:

- Very fast breathing. (Breathing rate over 40 breaths per minute.)
- Extreme shortness of breath.
Grunting sounds with breathing.
- Bluish color of the lips, fingernails, or skin
- Wheezing; severe cough; lethargy
- Temperature of 100.4°F or higher in a baby less than 3 months old; 104°F or higher in a child 3 months to 3 years old.

Flu

Flu or “influenza” is a virus that affects the nose, throat, breathing tube, and lungs.

“Stomach flu” is

stomach upset and diarrhea caused by a virus in the stomach and intestines. It is *not* true flu.



Prevention

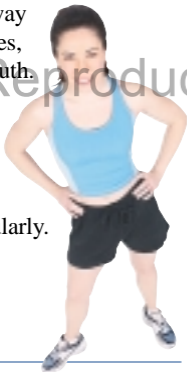
- Get an annual flu vaccine if you are age 50 or older, have a chronic medical condition, such as diabetes, heart or lung disease, or if you are a caregiver.
- Follow your child's doctor's advice about an annual flu vaccine for your child.

Influenza vaccines are given in 2 ways:

- Flu shot
- Nasal-spray flu vaccine. This is recommended only for healthy persons aged 5 to 49 years.

{ **Note:** Persons with a severe allergy to eggs should not get a flu shot. }

- Stay away from persons with the flu.
- Wash your hands often and keep them away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Eat well.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Exercise regularly.



Causes, Risk Factors & Care

Certain viruses cause the flu. A flu virus is picked up



by hand-to-hand contact of the virus or by breathing in air droplets that contain the virus. Each year, 20,000 people die from pneumonia and other complications of the flu. Persons are especially at risk for flu complications if they are age 65 or older, frail, and/or have conditions listed on page 16.

Conditions that Increase Flu Complications

- A chronic lung disease, such as emphysema or bronchitis
- Heart disease
- Anemia
- Diabetes
- A weakened immune system from an illness, chemotherapy, taking corticosteroids, etc.



Most often, self-care treats the flu. People with a chronic illness should consult their doctors for advice to manage symptoms.

Besides an annual flu vaccine, your doctor may prescribe:

- Medicines to relieve flu symptoms
- Antiviral medicines, (e.g., amantadine, and rimantadine). These help make flu symptoms milder and help you recover sooner. {**Note:** Some antiviral medicines cause mental status changes in older persons and may be worse than the flu itself. }
- An antibiotic, but only if a bacterial infection is also present. Antibiotics **do not** treat the flu, itself.

Self-Care

- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Gargle every few hours with warm salt water ($\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt dissolved in 1 cup of warm water).
- Suck on lozenges or hard candies to lubricate your throat. (**Do not** give to children under age 5.)
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever.

Note: Do not give aspirin to anyone under age 19. Aspirin and other medicines with salicylates have been linked to Reye's Syndrome.

- Don't suppress a cough that produces mucus.

Ask your

pharmacist for an over-the-counter expectorant if this is all right with your doctor.

- Avoid contact with others so you don't spread the flu.
- Wash your hands often, especially after blowing your nose and before handling food.



Contact Doctor For:

- Onset of flu symptoms especially if you are at risk for complications from the flu
- Sinus pain, ear pain or drainage from the ear
- Fever. (See Temperatures for different ages listed on page 8.)
- Yellow or green sputum or a nasal discharge for more than 5 days
- Flu symptoms that get worse or last longer than a week and self-care brings no relief

Get Immediate Care For:

- Purple lips, severe or increasing shortness of breath, or severe wheezing
- Coughing up true, red blood
- Fever in children under age 3 as listed on page 11
- Red or purple rash that doesn't fade when pressure is applied to the skin
- Stiff neck, seizure, lethargy, severe, persistent headache

- Bulging of the fontanelle (soft spot on the skull) in an infant
- Feeling confused, very little or no urine, sunken eyes, dry skin that doesn't spring back when pinched

For More Information

Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention - National

Immunization Program

800.232.2522 (English)

800.232.0233 (Spanish)

www.cdc.gov/nip

American Lung Association

800.586.4872 • www.lungusa.org

Colds & Flu Comparison Chart

Signs & Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever, chills	Mild fever, if any	Usual; can be high fever
Headache	Rare	Usual
General aches and pains	Mild, if any	Usual; often severe; affect the body all over
Fatigue, weakness	Mild, if any	Usual; often severe. You want to stay in bed.
Runny, stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common; can become severe