

Colds

Causes

Unlike adults, young children often get 6-8 colds per year. Children catch colds from other people who have colds. Preschool children are particularly prone to colds because they often place their fingers in their mouth or nose, and they do not often wash their hands. They also tend to be more contagious because of their "uncovered" coughing and sneezing. Frequent colds are not a sign of poor health, nutritional deficiencies, or immune system problems. Over a hundred viruses can cause the "common cold." Each cold is due to a separate cold virus (you will not re-catch the same cold).

Symptoms

The symptoms from one cold to the next are usually about the same. Fever associated with colds may last 3-4 days and can usually be controlled with medications at home. On average, cough and runny nose last for 10 days in adults and two weeks in children. The discharge from the nose is often clear for a few days, then turns cloudy, yellow or green. Colored nasal drainage usually occurs in the last few days of a cold and is not a sign of worsening. A cough helps your child clear phlegm from the chest.

Let your child set his own pace. If there is no fever, being outdoors or going to school will not cause complications. Adults rarely stop their own routines because of runny noses, neither should kids. Your child's appetite may be poor, and they may refuse all solid food.

Treatment and Medicine

Do not give "cold medicines" to children less than 2 years old without our advice. Antibiotics will not help a cold in any way. No medicine, supplement, vitamin, or food makes a cold go away faster. All treatment should be directed at making your child more comfortable. If they are playful and happy, do not treat them with anything.

A cool mist vaporizer is sometimes helpful in the winter to keep secretions and mucous thin. Use only water in the vaporizer. Thick mucous in an infant's nose may be removed with 2-4 drops of saline solution in each nostril and a bulb syringe. Some infants with a cold sleep better tilted upright.

Call the office if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Cold symptoms getting worse after 14 days.
- Rapid shallow breathing, shortness of breath, or wheezing.
- Fever lasting over 3-4 days or the recurrence of fever after day 4 of a cold.
- Irritability in an infant.
- Refusal of liquids for an extended time.

In studies of cold medicines, most do not work in children. Regular honey, 5-10 ml at bedtime, can help with cough. Do not give honey to children under 12 months old. Some studies show that Benadryl (diphenhydramine) given at bedtime to children with colds can lead to better sleep. Dosing is below:

Children's Benadryl Allergy Liquid (Diphenhydramine 12.5mg per 5ml)	For 2-5 years old	Give 2.5-5 ml every 6 hours
	For 6-11 years old	Give 5-10 ml every 6 hours
	For 12 and older	Use package dose