

COLDS

The common cold is a mild viral infection of the upper respiratory tract (nose and throat) caused by many different viruses.

Signs and Symptoms:

Cold symptoms may include stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, watery eyes, fluid in the ears, and general fatigue. Occasionally a mild fever may occur with a cold.

Contagiousness:

The viruses that cause the common cold are transmitted by direct person-to-person contact or by inhalation of airborne droplets. The virus are transmitted indirectly by hands and articles freshly soiled by discharges of the nose and throat of an infected person. Viruses continue to be present in respiratory secretions for 2 to 3 after symptoms begin.

Treatment:

Treatment is aimed at relieving the symptoms. There is no medication to cure viral illnesses. Health care providers generally suggest rest and plenty of fluids. If a cold persists for greater than 10 to 14 days and is accompanied by high fever, persistent cough, and/or complaint of ear pain, the child may have a secondary bacterial infection and should be taken to their health care provider to determine if additional treatment is required.

Parents should be advised that aspirin or products containing aspirin should **never** be administered to children for fever control in viral infections because of the rare association with Reyes Syndrome, a serious illness.

School Exclusion Guidelines:

School exclusion is not indicated as long as a student feels well enough to attend school.

Prevention:

Good hand washing and cleanliness are essential to stop the spread of all respiratory tract diseases.