

Common Cold

Dear parent or guardian:

Your child will likely get a cold several times a year. A cold is a mild infection of the upper respiratory system caused by a virus. Young children may get 5–6 colds a year. Children with colds typically don't need to stay home from school unless they have a fever. If a child is too sick to take part in normal activities, they should stay home.

Symptoms

A cold may last up to 2 weeks. Symptoms include:

- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Coughing.
- Sneezing.
- Sore throat.
- Mild fever.
- Swollen glands.
- Stuffy ears.
- Clear, yellow, or green mucous.
- Mild aches and pain.
- Mild fever.

Spread

Coughing or sneezing spreads cold viruses through the air. Cold viruses can also spread on hands and surfaces.

Diagnosis and treatment

There is no cure for the common cold. Antibiotics are not effective against colds. Get enough rest and drink plenty of fluids to ease symptoms.

Prevention

Good hygiene is the best way to prevent spreading colds:

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water. Antibacterial soap is not necessary.
- Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with their elbow or a tissue.
- Throw tissues away after each use.
- Wash your hands after using a tissue.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

Learn more

For more info, contact a healthcare provider.