

Cold and Flu



Colds and the flu are caused by viruses and can last longer than two weeks. Thick yellow or green mucus is a normal sign your body is fighting the virus. It doesn't mean you need an antibiotic.

What you can do:

- Drink more water. Sip hot liquids.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) to relieve aches. Read the label for a child's dose.
- Breathe moist air by using a humidifier or running a hot shower.
- Use a decongestant to release congested nose.
- If your nose is red and sore, dab on some petroleum jelly or salve, or use tissues with lotion.

Sore Throat



Only about 15% of the people who go to a doctor with a bad sore throat have a bacterial (strep) infection - most episodes of a sore throat are due to a virus. You only need antibiotics if a test shows you have strep throat.

What you can do:

- Drink more water. Honey and lemon in hot water is good, too.
- Gargle with warm salt water or use a throat lozenge.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) to relieve pain. Read the label for a child's dose.

Antibiotics:

- ✓ Are for bacterial infections
- ✓ Will not work on viral illnesses
- ✓ Will not make your cold or flu go away
- ✓ Can create resistant bacteria or super bugs if taken when not needed. Then when you need the antibiotic for a serious bacterial illness, it may not work.

Remember:

- ✓ A virus has to run its course
- ✓ There are some things that you can do to help you feel better
- ✓ Know when to see a nurse/doctor

For more information, contact your health centre, medical clinic or public health unit.

Antibiotics

Are they right for your illness?



Self-care tips for treating:

Bronchitis
Ear Infections
Sinus Infections
Cold and Flu
Sore Throat

Bronchitis



Bronchitis is an infection of tubes in the lungs. Cold viruses cause most cases of bronchitis.

- Antibiotics won't help, because they don't kill viruses.
- Even when the mucus you cough up is thick and yellow, it does not mean that antibiotics would help you get better faster.
- Taking antibiotics when they are not needed can promote the growth of stronger germs.

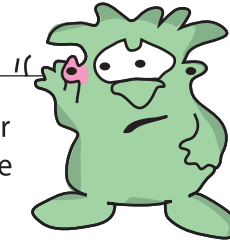
What you can do:

- Drink more water. Sip hot liquids.
- Breathe moist air by using a humidifier or running a hot shower.
- To relieve a congested nose, gently squirt salt water into the nose with a bulb syringe. Put moist hot towels on the face. Try a decongestant for 2-3 days.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) to relieve pain. Read the label for a child's dose.

Call your Doctor/Nurse if:

- ✓ You develop a high fever (more than 38.5°C)
- ✓ You have difficulty breathing
- ✓ Your symptoms change or get worse
- ✓ Your illness lasts longer than a week

Ear Infections



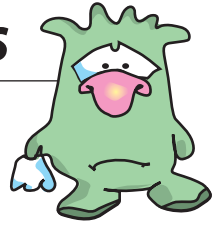
There are different kinds of ear infections. Cold viruses are the most common cause of ear infections but allergies and second-hand smoke can promote these infections.

- As many as 80% of ear infections will clear up on their own.
- Resistance to antibiotics occurs most often in children who take antibiotics for repeated ear infections.
- Swelling in the air passage behind the eardrum can cause fluid to become trapped.
- Bacteria may then start to grow in the trapped fluid. Signs of bacterial infection include worsening pain, fever dizziness and ringing in the ears.
- Your health care provider may treat this kind of infection with an antibiotic.

What you can do:

- Press a warm wash cloth or heating pad set on low against the sore ear.
- Rest and let your body fight the infection.
- Drink more water.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) to relieve pain. Read the label for a child's dose.
- Decongestants may help to relieve a congested nose. Avoid antihistamines.

Sinus Infections



A sinus infection involves a build up of mucus in the sinuses. Cold viruses are the most common cause of sinusitis.

- Most sinus infections start after a cold. Your body fights the cold virus by making mucus which helps wash the virus out of your nose and sinuses. The lining of the sinuses swells and the mucus is partly blocked. This is called sinusitis.
- Smoking, allergies, overuse of nasal sprays, swimming, even changes in air pressure, can lead to sinusitis. When mucus is blocking a sinus passage, bacteria may start to grow.
- Bacterial infections can cause sinus pressure, pain around the eyes and fever. This is called acute bacterial sinusitis.
- A cold that starts to get better then gets worse may be a sign of acute bacterial sinusitis. Your health care provider may treat this kind of infection with an antibiotic.

What you can do:

- Drink more water. Sip hot liquids.
- Breathe moist air by using a humidifier or running a hot shower.
- Take ibuprofen (Advil) to relieve sinus pain or toothaches resulting from sinus pressure. Read the label for a child's dose.
- To relieve a congested nose, gently squirt salt water into the nose with a bulb syringe. Put moist hot towels on the face. Try a decongestant for 2-3 days.