

Viral Upper Respiratory Infection

Your child has been diagnosed or is suspected of having a viral upper respiratory infection (URI) and may be experiencing or demonstrating symptoms much like a common cold including:

- Runny or congested (stuffy) nose is the main symptom. The nasal discharge may be clear, cloudy, yellow or green.
- Fever or a sore throat may be the first symptom.
- Other common associated symptoms: a cough, hoarse voice, watery eyes, and swollen lymph nodes in the neck

Causes

- Because there are so many viruses that cause colds, it's normal for healthy children to get at least 6 colds a year. With every new cold, your child's body builds up immunity to that virus.
- Most parents know when their child has a cold, often because they have it too or other children in child care or school have it. You don't need to call or see your child's doctor for a common cold unless your child develops a possible complication (such as an earache).
- The average cold lasts about 2 weeks and there is no medicine to make it go away sooner.
- There are good ways to relieve many of the symptoms. With most colds, the initial symptom is a runny nose, followed in 3 or 4 days by a congested nose. The treatment for each is different.

Expected Course

- Fever 2-3 days, nasal discharge 7-14 days, cough 2-3 weeks.

Care & Treatment

- **Runny Nose with Lots of Discharge: Blow or Suction the Nose.** The nasal mucus and discharge is washing viruses and bacteria out of the nose and sinuses. Having your child blow the nose is all that is needed. Teach your child how to blow the nose at age 2 or 3. For younger children, gently suction the nose with a suction bulb. If the skin around the nostrils becomes sore or irritated, apply a little petroleum jelly twice a day. Cleanse the skin first with water.
 - **Nasal Saline Rinses to Open a Blocked Nose.** Use saline (salt water) nose drops or spray to loosen up the dried mucus. How Often: Do nasal saline rinses when your child can't breathe through the nose. Saline nose drops or spray can be bought in any drugstore. No prescription is needed.
 - **Fluids - Offer More.** Encourage your child to drink adequate fluids to prevent dehydration. This will also thin out the nasal secretions and loosen any phlegm in the lungs.
 - **Humidifier-** If the air in your home is dry, use a humidifier.
 - **Medicines for Colds**
- Pain - Use acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen for muscle aches, headaches, or sore throat.
- Sore Throat - Use hard candy if over 6 years old. Sip warm chicken broth if over 1 year old. Some children prefer cold foods such as popsicles or ice cream.
- Fever Medicine
- For fever above 102 F (39 C), give acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen.
 - For fevers 100-102 F (37.8 to 39 C), fever medicines are not needed. Reason: Fever turns on your body's immune system. Fever helps fight the infection.

Medications:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol): ALL AGES	Infant/Children's Suspension Liquid 160mg/5mL	Junior Strength Chewable Tablet
Weight	Dose	Tablets
6 -11 lbs	¼ tsp or 1.25 mL	
12-17 lbs	½ tsp or 2.5 mL	
18-23 lbs	¾ tsp or 3.75 mL	
24-35 lbs	1 tsp or 5 mL	
36-47 lbs	1 ½ tsp or 7.5 mL	
48-59 lbs	2 tsp or 10 mL	2 tablets
60-71 lbs	2 ½ tsp or 12.5 mL	2 ½ tablets
72-95 lbs	3 tsp or 15 mL	3 tablets
>96 lbs		4 tablets

*Use weight to dose. One dose lasts 4-6 hours.

Ibuprofen (Motrin): > 6 MONTHS OF AGE	Infant Drops 50mg/1.25 mL (Ages 6 - 23 months)	Children's Suspension 100mg/5 mL (Ages 2- 11)	Children's Chewable Tablets 50mg	Junior Strength Chewable Tablets or Capsules 100mg
Weight	Dropperful	Dose	Tablets	Tablet or Capsule
12-17 lbs	1 = 1.25 mL			
18-23 lbs	1 ½ = 1.875 mL			
24-35 lbs		1 tsp or 5 mL	2 tablets	
36-47 lbs		1 ½ tsp or 7.5 mL	3 tablets	
48-59 lbs		2 tsp or 10 mL	4 tablets	2 tablets
60-71 lbs		2 ½ tsp or 12.5 mL	5 tablets	2 ½ tablets
71-95 lbs		3 tsp or 15 mL	6 tablets	3 tablets

*Use weight to dose. One dose lasts 6-8 hours.

Return to Childcare/School

- Your child can return to day care or school after the fever is gone and your child feels well enough to participate in normal activities.
- For practical purposes, the spread of colds cannot be prevented.
- Frequent handwashing recommended

When to Call

Continue Self-Care at Home

- Cold (upper respiratory infection) with no complications

Call Office to be Seen Within 24-72 Hours

- Earache
- Sinus pain (not just congestion) present > 48 hours after using nasal washes and pain medicine (Age: usually 6 years and older)
- Sore throat is the main symptom and present > 48 hours
- Fever present > 3 days
- Blocked nose interferes with sleep after using nasal washes several times
- Earache (not severe) and no fever or ear discharge
- Yellow scabs around the nasal openings
- Nasal discharge present > 14 days

Call Office to be Urgently Seen

- Age < 1 year with difficulty feeding and fluid intake < 50% of normal amount

- Age < 2 years and ear infection suspected by triager
- Cloudy discharge from ear canal
- Fever returns after going away > 24 hours and symptoms worse or not improved

Go to the ER now

- Not alert when awake (true lethargy)
- Retractions - skin between the ribs is pulling in (sinking in) with each breath (includes suprasternal retractions)
- Fever and weak immune system (sickle cell disease, HIV, chemotherapy, organ transplant, adrenal insufficiency, chronic steroids, etc)
- Difficulty breathing and not improved by cleaning out the nose
- Newborn (< 1 month old) and starts to look or act abnormal in any way (e.g., decrease in activity or feeding)
- High-risk child (e.g., underlying severe lung disease such as CF or trach)
- Can't swallow fluids (older children may be drooling)
- Dehydration suspected (e.g., no urine in > 8 hours, no tears with crying, and very dry mouth)
- Fever > 105° F (40.6° C)

Call 911 now

- Severe difficulty breathing (struggling for each breath, unable to speak or cry because of difficulty breathing, making grunting noises with each breath)