

Common Cold

Symptoms

1. Runny nose, mild cough, sore throat, decreased appetite, occasionally low grade fever (<101.)
2. Children can have 7-10 colds in one season, particularly the first year they are in any sort of a daycare or school setting.
3. Colds are most contagious in the first two days – usually accompanied by a clear runny nose.
4. **The change in color of the mucous to yellow or green after 5-7 days (in the absence of fever or headache) usually signifies the end of the cold and will be gone in 2-3 days. Green noses don't automatically need antibiotics! After all, boogers are green!**

What will help?

1. For children under one use nasal saline, bulb syringe, elevating mattress (put book underneath) or allowing to sleep in car seat if they can breathe more easily this way. Use **nasal saline drops**, with suctioning if there is a lot of mucous, before feeding and sleeping. A warm bath will help bring break up the mucous.
2. For children 1-3, nasal saline washes may help (try **Simply Saline** or the **NeilMed sinus rinse** for children). A trial of **Benadryl** may be necessary to relieve congestion. (see medication dosage link) It is especially helpful at night if cough is interrupting sleep.

3. For older children (>2 years) with congestion try **mint tea** (warm but not hot) with 1 teaspoon of honey to soothe sore throats and help break up congestion. For difficulty breathing through nose at night try **Breathe Right strips** for children. For persistent nighttime cough try humidifier, elevation and possibly Benadryl.
4. “Just a spoonful of sugar....”- sucking on a **lollipop** or a **teaspoon of honey** has been shown to decrease sore throat as much as cough medicines. Tylenol or motrin is appropriate for fever or sore throat, but does not work for cough.

When to worry?

1. Any fever >100.4 in infants less than 6 months old – call for an appointment
2. Fever for greater than 3 days in any age child
3. Fussiness, not eating well, pulling on ears, breathing quickly or pulling in at ribs when breathing.
4. Green, yellow nasal discharge that is accompanied by fever, headache, sinus pressure or that persists more than 5-7 days.
5. Drainage out of ear canals.
6. A cold that persists for a week or more, or that is suddenly accompanied by a fever.