Common Cold, Child

A cold is an infection of the air passages to the lungs (*upper respiratory system*). Colds are easy to spread (*contagious*), especially during the first 3 or 4 days. Cold germs are spread by coughing, sneezing, and hand-to-hand contact. Medicines (*antibiotics*) that kill germs cannot cure a cold. A cold will usually clear up in a few days, but some children may be sick for a week or two.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Use saline nose drops often to keep the nose open from secretions. It works better than using a bulb syringe, which can cause minor bruising inside the child's nose. Occasionally, you may need to use a bulb syringe, but saline rinsing of the nostrils may be more effective in keeping the nose open. This is especially important for infants who need an open nose to be able to suck with a closed mouth.
- Only give your child over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your child's caregiver.
- Use a **cool mist** humidifier to increase air moisture. This will make it easier for your child to breath. **Do not use hot steam.**
- Have your child rest and sleep as much as possible.
- Have your child wash his or her hands often.
- Encourage your child to drink clear liquids, such as water, fruit juices, clear soups, and carbonated beverages.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 100.5º F (38.1° C) or higher for more than 1 day.
- Your child has a sore throat that gets worse, or you see white or yellow spots in his or her throat.
- Your child's cough is getting worse or lasts more than 10 days.
- Your child develops a rash.
- Your child develops large and tender lumps in his or her neck.
- An earache, headache, or stiff neck develops.
- Thick greenish or yellowish discharge comes out of the nose.
- Thick yellow, green, gray, or bloody mucus (*phlegm*) is coughed up.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has trouble breathing or is very sleepy.
- Your child has chest pain.
- Your child's skin or nails look gray or blue.
- You think anything is getting worse.
- Your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your child's condition.
- Will get help right away if your child is not doing well or gets worse.

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