Upper Respiratory Infections In Children

Your child has an upper respiratory infection or cold. **Colds are caused by viruses and are not helped by giving antibiotics.** Usually there is a mild fever for 3-4 days. Congestion and cough may be present for as long as 1-2 weeks. Colds are contagious. Do not send your child to school until the fever is gone.

Treatment includes making your child more comfortable. For nasal congestion use a cool mist vaporizer. You may also use over the counter decongestants in children over 6 months old if approved by your caregiver. Use saline nose drops frequently to keep the nose open from secretions. It works better than suctioning with the bulb syringe, which can cause minor bruising inside the child's nose. Occasionally you may have to use bulb suctioning, but it is strongly believed that saline rinsing of the nostrils is more effective in keeping the nose open. This is especially important for the infant who needs an open nose to be able to suck with a closed mouth. Cough medicine may be used in older children.

Colds may lead to more serious problems such as ear or sinus infection or pneumonia.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF YOUR CHILD:

- Complains of earache.
- Has a foul-smelling, thick nasal discharge.
- Increased breathing difficulty, or becomes exhausted.
- 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.**

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